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CUPIDAE LEGUM JUVENTUTI

# THE ELEMENTS OF ROMAN LAW

with a translation

of the

INSTITUTES OF JUSTINIAN

BY

R. W. LEE, D.C.L., F.B.A.,

READER IN ROMAN LAW OF THE  
INNS OF COURT

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## PREFACE

MANY books have been written in English on Roman Law. Most of them have been soon forgotten. This might serve as a warning to anyone who proposes to add to their number. But the circumstances of the time and the convenience of students may justify the venture. In the Inns of Court and in our Universities law students are required to submit to an examination in Roman Law. Sometimes this implies knowledge of a Latin text, sometimes not. Since Latin today, unfortunately, no longer holds its former place in a general education, few will go to the original sources unless they are required to do so, and even then the study of the text is too often reluctant and perfunctory. To me at least it seems lamentable that anyone should be credited with a knowledge of Roman Law who has not read Justinian's Institutes. If students cannot or will not read the original, they may, perhaps, be induced to read a translation. The study of the Institutes demands an Introduction and a Commentary. The works of Moyle and Sandars are available, but are not calculated to attract students who know little Latin and who do not intend to devote much of their life to the study of Roman Law. William Murray (afterwards Lord Mansfield) did well when he advised the young Duke of Portland to "read and study Justinian's Institutes without any other comment than the short one of Vinnius".<sup>1</sup> This is a little duodecimo volume containing the text with Latin notes. But even this goes beyond what is required today. In this book I have tried to combine commentary and text so that the first will supply what is wanted to make the second intelligible and to place it in a right perspective. I have put in the margin of the commentary references to the text and in the margin of the text references to the commentary. It is hoped that students will make it their practice to go from one to the other. The next step will be to refer to the passages cited in the margin or at the foot of the page from the Institutes of Gaius, available in the editions of Muirhead, Poste or Abdy and Walker. Some will perhaps go further and turn up a passage in the Digest or the Code.

Much has been written on the existing crisis in the study of

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<sup>1</sup> Footnote, *Lord Mansfield*, p. 29.

Roman Law. The trouble is that for the first time in its history an unbridgeable gulf separates the expert scholar from the docile student who is not concerned with critical dissection of Latin texts and who looks to scholars to communicate their conclusions, if and when they reach them. With this reservation the study of Roman Law remains what it always has been and carries on its secular tradition.

The reasons which justify it, particularly for students who breathe a Common Law atmosphere, are principally these:—

1. Roman Law is one of the great things which have happened in the world. It is part of a liberal education to know something about it.

2. Roman Law is an introduction to the study of the Science of Law, or, as we call it, Jurisprudence. For many centuries the Science of Law *was* Roman Law. If in modern times it has widened its outlook and improved its methods its debt to Roman Law remains unquestioned.

3. Roman Law is a key to the terminology and, to a great extent, to the substance of foreign systems.

4. Roman Law enlarges the mind. Burke has well said that “the science of law does more to strengthen the mind than to liberalize it”. The study of Roman Law liberalizes the mind by expanding the range of vision.

To return to the subject of this book. The whole of the Institutes is not of equal interest. The parts which seem to me of less importance are printed in smaller type. The text is sometimes verbose. I have not hesitated upon occasion to trim the feathers of the imperial eagle. But the whole has been translated with a few trifling omissions. The sequence of the Titles has been changed to accommodate it to the order of treatment in the commentary. I have included some translated extracts from Gaius, in particular his account of the formula. The few remarks on the modern law interspersed through the book are intended not to furnish precise information so much as to direct attention to some features in the landscape. It may be that many of my readers will read no other book on Roman Law than this. If they retain in their memories something worth having I shall have achieved my purpose. For the sake of “the weaker brethren” I have added in an Appendix a translation of Latin words and phrases which occur in the text.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the kindness of friends who have taken an interest in the progress of this work. The Camden

Professor of Ancient History, Mr. Hugh Last, has guided my steps when I strayed from Law into History and directed my attention to matters of interest. Dr. Martin Wolff, formerly Professor of Civil Law in the University of Berlin, has allowed me to make use of his encyclopaedic knowledge. Mr. Cecil Fifoot, Fellow of Hertford College, has given me the benefit of his nicely critical judgment and charged himself with the burden of reading the proofs.

I have made constant use of Professor Buckland's various works, of Girard's *Manuel élémentaire de Droit Romain* and of Professor Jolowicz's *Historical Introduction to Roman Law*, and amongst books less familiar to English readers of Professor Arangio-Ruiz's *Istituzioni* and *Storia del Diritto Romano*, and of Paul Jörs, *Römisches Privatrecht* (2nd ed.), edited by Kunkel.

R. W. LEE.

ALL SOULS COLLEGE,  
OXFORD.  
June, 1944.

The favourable reception of this book has justified a reprint at a reduced price. The text has been carefully revised and full advantage taken of Professor Duff's helpful comment in the *Law Quarterly Review* (vol. 61). A few sections have been rewritten, but there is no substantial change. It is evident from the reviews of the book in legal periodicals that learned persons are not agreed as to the place which Roman Law should occupy today in legal education, and as to the method of teaching it. The author's opinion, so far as concerns the students whom he has in view, is explained in the Preface, and the purpose of this book is to give effect to it.

Students are invited not to overlook the *Summary*, which may be of use to them in revising their work.

R. W. L.

September, 1946.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
SUMMARY OF TEXT . . . . .	vii
THE INSTITUTES OF JUSTINIAN—CONTENTS .. ..	xvi
CHRONOLOGY . . . . .	xix
CITATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS .. ..	xxiii
COMMENTARY AND TRANSLATION .. ..	1
VOCABULARY .. ..	475
INDEX . . . . .	479

## SUMMARY OF TEXT

	PAGE
<b>INTRODUCTION .. .. .</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I.—HISTORICAL SKETCH . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Early Roman Society. 2. The Roman State—King—Senate — People — Comitia curiata. 3. Patricians — Plebeians — Clients. 4. The Servian Constitution — Comitia centuriata. 5. <i>Leges regiae</i> . 6. End of the monarchy—Consequent changes. 7. <i>Lex—Plebiscitum—Comitia tributa—Concilium plebis—Lex Hortensia</i> . 8. <i>Senatusconsulta</i> . 9–10. The Law of the Twelve Tables. 11. Interpretation of the Law — The College of pontiffs — <i>Jus Flavianum—Jus Aelianum—The Triperita</i> . 12. Edicts of the Magistrates— <i>Praetor urbanus—Praetor peregrinus—The Perpetual Edict</i> . 13. Edict of the <i>Curule Aediles</i> . 14. Commentaries on the Edict. 15–19. The Magistrates of the Republic — consuls — dictator — praetors — aediles — censors — quaestors — tribunes. 20. Change from Republic to Empire — The legal system under the Empire. 21. Imperial legislation. 22. <i>Responsa prudentium</i> . 23. <i>Sabinians and Proculians—The great jurists—The Law of Citations</i> . 24. Change from Diarchy or Principate to Absolute Monarchy—Partition of the Empire. 25. Downfall of the Western Empire. 26–27. Roman Law in the West—Legislation of the barbarian Kings. 28. Roman Law in the Dark Ages—Glossators—Post-glossators—Humanists — Roman Law in modern times. 29. The “reception” of the Roman Law. 30. Roman Law in France. 31. Roman Law in the British Empire. 32–35. Roman Law in the Eastern Empire— <i>Lex and Jus—Justinian’s legislation—The Corpus Juris Civilis—Code—Digest—Institutes—Novels</i> . 36. General character of Justinian’s legislation — Interpolations. 37. Law in the Eastern Empire after Justinian — The <i>Basilica</i> . 38. Other Roman Law sources. 39–41. <i>Gaius</i> .	
<b>II.—THE INSTITUTES—PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS . . . .</b>	<b>31</b>
42–44. Justice and Jurisprudence. 45. Public and Private Law. 46–52. <i>Jus civile—jus gentium—jus naturale</i> . 53. <i>Jus scriptum—jus non scriptum</i> . 54. Sources of the <i>jus scriptum</i> . 55. The law relating to Persons, to Things and to Actions. 56. Summary of the contents of the Institutes.	

## BOOK I

## THE LAW OF PERSONS

	PAGE
57 Introductory	44
I —THE FIRST DIVISION OF PERSONS— Free men and slaves (58)	44
59–61 How slavery comes into existence—Unfree birth—Hostile capture—Rules of the civil law	
62 Rights of masters over slaves	
63 The <i>de facto</i> condition of slaves	
64 Was the slave a thing or a person?	
65 Quasi-servile conditions	
66 Free men ( <i>ingenui</i> )—freedmen ( <i>libertini</i> )	
67 Manumission	
68–69 Legal status of freedmen	
70 The history of manumission	
71 Lex Junia— <i>Latinitas</i>	
72 Lex Fufia Caninia	
73 Lex Aelia Sentia	
74 Justinian's changes in the law of manumission	
II —THE SECOND DIVISION OF PERSONS — Independent and dependent status (75)	58
76–79 <i>Patria potestas</i> —its consequences and incidents	
80 How <i>patria potestas</i> came into existence	
81–86 Civil law marriage	
87 <i>Sponsalia</i>	
88 No ceremony required for marriage	
89–90 Status of wife—free marriage— <i>manus</i> marriage	
91 Divorce	
92 Termination of marriage by operation of law	
93 Concubinage.	
94 Peregrine marriage	
95 Legitimation	
96 Status of children	
97 Adoption—of two kinds	
98–103 Adrogation	
104–105 Adoption in the narrower sense— <i>adoptio plena</i> <i>adoptio minus plena</i>	
106 <i>Patria potestas</i> also created by imperial rescript, 107 by post liminium, 108 in various other ways	
109–110 How <i>patria potestas</i> ceased to exist — Emancipation	
111 <i>Capitis deminutio</i>	
112 <i>Manus</i>	
113 <i>Mancipium</i>	
III —THE THIRD DIVISION OF PERSONS—Some independent persons have a tutor or curator, others not (114)	83
115 Definition of <i>tutela</i>	
116–119 Different kinds of <i>tutela</i> — <i>testamentaria</i> — <i>legitima</i> — <i>fiduciaria</i> — <i>dativa</i>	
120–123 Duties and functions of tutors	
124 Protection of wards against maladministration	
125 The perpetual <i>tutelage</i> of women	
126 Curatorship of minors	
127 Status of minors	
128 Guardianship of insane persons and prodigals	
IV —JURISTIC PERSONS (129)	99
APPENDIX The influence of the Roman Law of Persons upon modern systems (130)	101

## BOOK II

## THE LAW OF PROPERTY

	PAGE
I.—PRELIMINARY .. .. .	105
131. The second principal division of the Roman private law is the Law relating to Things, which includes Property, Succession and Obligations—The subject of this Book is the Law of Property. 132. Classification of things. 133–134. Things in our patrimony—things outside our patrimony. 135. <i>Res nullius</i> . 136. Things corporeal—things incorporeal. 137. <i>Res Mancipi</i> — <i>res nec Mancipi</i> . 138. Movables—immovables. 139. Ownership. 140. Ownership by quiritary title—inferior modes of ownership. 141. Summary of the Second Book of the Institutes. 142. Topics omitted by Justinian.	
II.—MODES OF ACQUISITION (143–144) .. .. .	112
III.—ACQUISITION BY CIVIL LAW (145) .. .. .	112
146–152. <i>Mancipatio</i> . 153–155. <i>In jure cessio</i> . 156–163. <i>Usucapio</i> . 164. <i>Longi temporis praescriptio</i> . 165. Limitation of actions. 166. Changes in the law made by Justinian. 167–169. Other modes of acquisition by civil law— <i>lex</i> — <i>adjudicatio</i> — <i>litis aestimatio</i> .	
IV.—ACQUISITION BY NATURAL LAW (170) .. .. .	125
171–174. <i>Occupatio</i> . 175–184. <i>Accessio</i> — <i>alluvio</i> — <i>islands</i> — <i>river-beds</i> — <i>building</i> — <i>commixtio</i> — <i>confusio</i> . 185. <i>Specificatio</i> . 186–187. Perception and Separation of fruits. 188–196. <i>Traditio</i> . 197. <i>Thesaurus</i> .	
V.—DONATION OR GIFT (198) . . . . .	143
199–203. <i>Donatio inter vivos</i> . 204–206. <i>Donatio mortis causa</i> . 207. <i>Donatio propter nuptias</i> .	
VI.—DOS (208–213) .. .. .	146
VII.—COMPETENCE TO ALIENATE (214–215) .. .. .	150
VIII.—ACQUISITION THROUGH AGENTS (216–220) .. .. .	152
IX.—SERVITUDES (221–222) . . . . .	156
X.—REAL OR PRAEDIAL SERVITUDES (223–227) .. .. .	156
228–229. How created, how extinguished.	
XI.—PERSONAL SERVITUDES (230) .. .. .	162
231–233. <i>Ususfructus</i> . 234. <i>Usus</i> . 235. <i>Habitatio</i> . 236. <i>Operae servorum</i> . 237–238. How created, how extinguished. 239. Abnormal personal servitudes.	
XII.—RULES RELATING TO SERVITUDES IN GENERAL (240) .. .. .	165
XIII.—OTHER JURA IN RE ALIENA (241) .. .. .	168



	PAGE
XIV.—EMPHYTEUSIS—SUPERFICIES (242—243) .. .. .	169
XV.—REAL SECURITIES (244) .. .. .	170
245. Mancipatio or in jure cessio cum fiducia.	
246. Pignus. 247. Hypotheca. 248. Priorities—jus offerendi. 249. Legal or tacit hypothecs. 250. Extinction of real securities. . 251. Unsatisfactory state of Roman Law of mortgage.	
XVI.—POSSESSION (252—258) .. .. .	174
APPENDIX. Influence of the Roman Law of Property on modern systems (259) .. .. .	177

### BOOK III

#### THE LAW OF SUCCESSION

I.—SUCCESSION IN GENERAL (260—261) .. .. .	179
II.—TESTAMENTARY SUCCESSION .. .. .	180
262. Requisites for validity of Roman will. 263. Initial requisites.	
III.—FORMAL REQUIREMENTS .. .. .	180
264. Testamentum comitiis calatis, 265. in procinctu, 266—268. per aes et libram. 269. Some unsolved problems. 270. Praetorian testament. 271. Testamentum tripertitum. 272. Nuncupative will. 273. Abnormal or irregular wills. 274. Other types of will.	
IV.—INSTITUTION OF HEIRS (275—281) .. .. .	187
V.—SUBSTITUTION OF HEIRS .. .. .	192
282—283. Vulgar, 284. pupillary, 285. exemplary.	
VI.—PERSONAL QUALIFICATION OF TESTATOR, HEIR AND WITNESSES (testamenti factio) (286) .. .. .	196
287—292. Who may make a will. 293. Who may be instituted heir. 294. Who may witness a will.	
VII.—JUS CAPIENDI—CADUCA—EREPTORIA (296—298) .. .. .	202
VIII.—WHO MUST BE INSTITUTED OR DISINHERITED (299—301) .. .. .	204
IX.—THE PLAINT OF THE UNDUTEOUS WILL (302—308) .. .. .	207
309. The legitim in modern law.	
X.—HOW WILLS FAIL TO TAKE EFFECT (310—319) .. .. .	212
XI.—DIFFERENT KINDS OF TESTAMENTARY HEIR—ACCEPTANCE OF THE INHERITANCE (320—323) .. .. .	216
324. Lapsed portions. 325. Transmission of inheritance. 326. Benefit of inventory.	
XII.—LEGACIES (327—339) .. .. .	221
XIII.—THE LEX FALCIDIA (340—345) .. .. .	233

	PAGE
XIV — FIDEICOMMISSA (346–358)	236
XV — CODICILS (359–363)	247
APPENDIX The modern law of testamentary succession (364)	250
XVI — INTESATE SUCCESSION (365)	251
366–372 by the Law of the Twelve Tables, 373–380 under the Praetor's Edict—bonorum possessio 381–383 Im- perial legislation before Justinian's Novels — S C Tertullianum — S C Orfitianum 384 Justinian's Novels 385–386 Mediaeval and modern law	
XVII — SUCCESSION TO FREEDMEN (387)	270
XVIII — OTHER CASES OF UNIVERSAL SUCCESSION (388)	273

## BOOK IV

## THE LAW OF OBLIGATIONS

I — OBLIGATIONS IN GENERAL (389–391)	276
392 Classification of obligations—civil and praetorian— ex contractu, quasi ex contractu, ex delicto, quasi ex delicto—civil and natural	
II — OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM CONTRACT	279
393 Contracts re, verbis, litteris, consensu 394 Con- tracts unilateral and bilateral, 395 stricti iuris and bonae fidei, 396 formal and informal, 397–399 abstract and causal 400–404 Standards of conduct—dolus and culpa—custodia	
III — REAL CONTRACTS (405)	283
406 Mutuum 407 Interest on money lent 408 Rate of interest 409 Accumulation of interest 410. Com- pound interest 411–412 Senatusconsultum Mace- donianum 413 Other contracts re 414–417 Commo- datum 418–422 Depositum 423–426 Pignus	
IV — VERBAL CONTRACTS (427)	291
428 Dotis dictio 429 Jusjurandum liberti 430. Stipu- lation 431–436 Origin and historical development. 436A Proof of stipulation 437 Scope of the stipulation. 438 Novation—stipulatio Aquiliana 439 Procedural stipulations	
V — THE CONTRACT LITTERIS (440)	298
441–442 The literal contract of Gaius, 443–444 of Justinian—querela non numeratae pecuniae 445 Is Justinian's literal contract really such?	
VI — THE CONSENSUAL CONTRACTS (446)	301

	PAGE
VII — SALE — essential elements — consent — thing — price (447)	302
448-449 Consent — contracts of sale unwritten and written 450-451 Earnest ( <i>arra</i> ) 452 Subject matter ( <i>res</i> ) 453 Price ( <i>pretium</i> ), 454 consists in money, 455 must be certain ( <i>certum</i> ), 456 genuine ( <i>verum</i> ), 457 and in certain cases fair ( <i>justum</i> ) — <i>laesio enormis</i> 458 Duties of the parties 459 Duties of the seller, 460 to deliver and to give vacant possession, 461 to take care of the thing until delivery, 462 to guarantee against eviction, 463-465 to guarantee against defects 466-468 The edict of the <i>curule aediles</i> — <i>actio redhibitoria</i> — <i>actio aestimatoria</i> or <i>quantum minoris</i> 469 Duties of the buyer 470-472 The theory of risk — when the risk passed to the purchaser 473 Actions 474 When did the property pass?	
VIII — HIRE — essential elements — consent — subject matter — remuneration (475)	314
476 Consent 477-479 Subject matter — <i>locatio conductio rei</i> — <i>operatum</i> — <i>operis</i> 480-481 Leases of land 482 Remuneration 483 Border line cases — <i>Emphyteusis</i> etc 484-488 Duties of parties 489 How the contract of hire was determined 490 Actions	
IX — PARTNERSHIP (491)	320
492 Kinds of partnership 493 Essential elements in the contract 494 Duties of the partners <i>inter se</i> 495 How partnership is determined 496 Actions 497 General aspects of partnership in Roman Law 498 <i>Appendix</i> — <i>Consortium</i> — the <i>Gaius fragments</i>	
X — MANDATE (499)	327
500 Essential elements 501-502 Duties of the parties 503 How mandate is determined 504 Actions 505 Mandate and agency — special uses of mandate 506-508 <i>Nexum</i> — <i>Fiducia</i>	
XI — INNOMINATE CONTRACTS (509-510)	333
XII — PACTS (511)	335
512 <i>Pacta adjecta</i> 513 <i>Pacta praetoria</i> 514 <i>Pacta legitima</i>	
XIII — UNILATERAL DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION (515)	338
516 <i>Votum</i> 517 <i>Pollicitatio</i>	
XIV — OF CONTRACT IN GENERAL (518)	338
519 Formation of contract — Essential elements 520 An agreement, 521-523 free from error, 529-530 intended to create and apt to create a legal obligation between the parties, 531 relating to an object which is possible and lawful, 532 between competent persons, 533-535 not voidable on the ground of fraud or fear ( <i>dolus</i> — <i>metus</i> ).	

	PAGE
536 Operation of contract. 537-541 'No one can stipulate for another.' 542-543 'No one can promise for another.' 544 The modern law.	
XV.—PRINCIPAL AND AGENT (545-546)	351
547-554. Liability of principal to third parties— <i>actiones adjecticiae qualitatis</i> .	
XVI.—PRINCIPAL AND AGENT (continued)—Rights of principal against third parties—novation—cession of actions— <i>actio utilis</i> (555)	356
XVII.—PRINCIPAL AND SURETY (556)	358
557. The verbal contract of suretyship— <i>sponsio</i> — <i>fidepromissio</i> — <i>fidejussio</i> 558 Suretyship by mandate, 559. by <i>constitutum debiti</i> . 560 Nature of surety's liability 561. The "benefits", 562 of cession of actions, 563. of division, 564. of order or excussion 565. The modern law. 566 Gaius on suretyship—early statutes 567. Intercession by women—S C <i>Vellaeianum</i> — <i>authentica si qua mulier</i> .	
XVIII.—QUASI-CONTRACT (568)	365
569-574 <i>Negotiorum gestio</i> 575-578 <i>Indebiti solutio</i> 579 Other cases—enrichment	
XIX.—OBLIGATIONS FROM DELICT (580-582)	370
XX.—FURTUM—RAPINA	370
583 Definition of <i>furtum</i> 584-585 Analysis of definition. 586. Kinds of theft 587 <i>Furtum manifestum</i> — <i>nec manifestum</i> 588 Aiding and abetting 589. Penalties—actions. 590-591 <i>Actio furti prohibiti</i> — <i>quaestio cum lance et licio</i> 592 <i>Actio furti concepti</i> — <i>oblatus non exhibitus</i> . 593 Other remedies 594 Who may bring the <i>actio furti</i> 595 Cases of theft outside the definition. 596 No theft within family 597 <i>Rapina</i>	
XXI.—INJURIA (598-602)	382
XXII.—DAMNUM INJURIA DATUM—The <i>lex Aquilia</i> (603)	386
604-608 What constitutes liability under the statute 609-610 Construction of the statute 611-613 Extended application of the statute 614-615 The <i>actio legis Aquiliae</i> 616 Other delicts	
XXIII.—QUASI-DELICTS (617-620)	393
XXIV.—NOXAL ACTIONS (621-625)	395
XXV.—DAMAGE BY ANIMALS (626)	398
XXVI.—PLURALITY OF CREDITORS AND DEBTORS (627-632)	399
XXVII.—ASSIGNMENT OF OBLIGATIONS (633-635)	402
636. No transfer of liabilities	

	PAGE
XXVIII.—How OBLIGATIONS ARE DETERMINED (637) .. .. .	404
638–639. Performance (solutio). 640. Release (accepti- latio). 641–643. Solutio per aes et libram. 644. Dis- charge by consent. 645–646. Novation. 647–648. Other modes of determination.	
APPENDIX—Roman Law and the modern law of obligations (649) .. .. .	410

## BOOK V

### THE LAW OF ACTIONS

650–651. Introductory—three periods in history of civil procedure .. .. .	412
I.—THE LEGIS ACTIO PROCEDURE .. .. .	412
652. Summons. 653. Trial. 654–659. Legis actio sacra- menti: 660. per iudicis postulationem; 661–662. per conditionem. 663–670. Execution—legis actio per manus injectionem. 671. Legis actio per pignoris captionem. 672. Legis actio procedure abolished—lex Aebutia—leges Juliae; 673. retained in two cases. 674. Origin of formulary system. 675. Characteristics.	
CLASSIFICATION OF ACTIONS (676) .. .. .	422
677–678. in rem—in personam. 679–680. civil—prae- torian. 681. in jus—in factum. 682. directa—utilis. 683–684. stricti iuris—bonae fidei. 685. rei persecuendae gratia—poenae persecuendae gratia. 686. perpetual —temporal. 687. transmissible—not transmissible. 688. iudicia legitima—iudicia imperio continentia. 689. actio popularis—actio privata. 690. actiones mixtae.	
II.—THE FORMULARY PROCEDURE (691) .. .. .	428
692. Summons. 693. Trial. 694. Proceedings in iure. 695. Litis contestatio. 696–698. Indefensus—confessus. 699. Proceedings apud iudicem.	
THE FORMULA (700) .. .. .	431
701. demonstratio. 702. intentio. 703. adjudicatio. 704. condemnatio. 705. what parts are found in what formulae—praejudicia. 706. Examples of formulae. 707–709. civil law actions in rem. 710. civil law actions in personam. 711. conditio certae pecuniae. 712. con- ditio triticaria. 713. actio ex stipulatu. 714. bonae fidei actions in personam. 715. praetorian actions in factum. 716–719. actio depositi—alternative formulae. 720–721. praescriptio. 722. exceptio. 723–724. exceptio doli. 725. replicatio—duplicatio—triplicatio. 726–727. exceptions in general. 728. classification of exceptions. 729. peremptory—dilatory. 730. in rem—in personam—	

	PAGE
rei cohaerentes—personae cohaerentes. 731-732. Execution. 733. against the person; 734. against property. 735. Missio in possessionem. 736. Venditio bonorum. 737. Cessio bonorum. 738. Distractio bonorum. 739. Procedure extra ordinem.	
III.—THE EXTRAORDINARY PROCEDURE (740) . . . .	445
741. Summons. 742. Trial. 743. Execution.	
IV.—INTERDICTS AND OTHER PRAETORIAN INSTITUTIONS . . . .	459
744. Interdicts—exhibitory—restitutory—prohibitory; 745. public and private; 746. possessory interdicts; 747. simple and double interdicts. 748. All interdicts are praetorian. 749-752. Procedure in simple interdicts; 753-755. in double interdicts. 756. In the latest period no difference between interdicts and actions. 757. Other praetorian institutions. 758. Restitutio in integrum. 759. Missio in possessionem. 760. Praetorian stipulations.	

# THE INSTITUTES OF JUSTINIAN

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
PROEM .. .. .	39

### BOOK I

TITLE	
I.—Of Justice and Law .. .. .	40
II.—Of the Law of Nature, Universal Law and the Civil Law ..	40
III.—Of the Law of Persons .. .. .	54
IV.—Of persons born free .. .. .	54
V.—Of freedmen .. .. .	55
VI.—Who may not manumit, and why .. .. .	56
VII.—Of the lex Fufia Caninia and its abolition .. .. .	57
VIII.—Of persons <i>sui juris</i> and persons <i>alieni juris</i> .. .. .	76
IX.—Of patria potestas .. .. .	76
X.—Of marriage .. .. .	77
XI.—Of adoptions .. .. .	79
XII.—How patria potestas comes to an end .. .. .	80
XIII.—Of tutelage .. .. .	91
XIV.—Who may be appointed tutors by will .. .. .	91
XV.—Of the statutory tutelage of agnates .. .. .	92
XVI.—Of capitis deminutio .. .. .	92
XVII.—Of the statutory tutelage of patrons .. .. .	93
XVIII.—Of the statutory tutelage of parents .. .. .	93
XIX.—Of fiduciary tutelage .. .. .	93
XX.—Of the Tutor Atilianus and the tutor appointed under the lex Julia and Titia .. .. .	93
XXI.—Of the authority of tutors .. .. .	94
XXII.—How tutelage is determined .. .. .	95
XXIII.—Of curators .. .. .	95
XXIV.—Of the security to be given by tutors and curators ..	96
XXV.—Of the excuses of tutors or curators .. .. .	97
XXVI.—Of tutors and curators who have come under suspicion ..	98

### BOOK II

I.—Of the classification of things .. .. .	110, 123, 136
II.—Of incorporeal things .. .. .	111
III.—Of servitudes .. .. .	161
IV.—Of usufruct .. .. .	166
V.—Of use and habitation .. .. .	167
VI.—Of usucapion and long possession .. .. .	123
VII.—Of donations .. .. .	149

TITLE	PAGE
VIII.—Of persons who may and who may not alienate .. ..	151
IX.—Of persons through whom we acquire .. ..	154, 179
X.—Of the execution of wills .. ..	185, 201
XI.—Of the military testament .. ..	186, 200
XII.—Who are not permitted to make a will .. ..	198
XIII.—Of the disherison of children .. ..	205
XIV.—Of the institution of heirs .. ..	190
XV.—Of vulgar substitution .. ..	194
XVI.—Of pupillary substitution .. ..	194
XVII.—In what ways wills fail to take effect .. ..	214
XXIII.—Of the undutious will .. ..	211
XIX.—Of the different kinds of heir .. ..	219
XX.—Of legacies .. ..	226
XXI.—Of the ademption and transference of legacies .. ..	283
XXII.—Of the <i>lex Falcidia</i> .. ..	285
XXIII.—Of fideicommissary inheritances .. ..	243
XXIV.—Of single things left by fideicommissum .. ..	246
XXV.—Of codicils .. ..	249

## BOOK III

I.—Of intestate succession .. ..	259
II.—Of the statutory succession of agnates .. ..	263
III.—Of the <i>senatusconsultum Tertullianum</i> .. ..	265
IV.—Of the <i>senatusconsultum Orfitianum</i> .. ..	266
V.—Of the succession of cognates .. ..	266
VI.—Of the degrees of relationship .. ..	267
VII.—Of the succession to freedmen .. ..	271
VIII.—Of the assignment of freedmen .. ..	272
IX.—Of possession of goods .. ..	268, 272
X.—Of acquisition by adrogation .. ..	273
XI.—Of persons to whom an estate is assigned to preserve gifts of freedom .. ..	274
XII.—Of successions now obsolete, namely, by sale of goods and under the <i>senatusconsultum Claudianum</i> .. ..	275
XIII.—Of obligations .. ..	283
XIV.—How an obligation is contracted re .. ..	290
XV.—Of the verbal obligation .. ..	296
XVI.—Of stipulations which have two creditors or two debtors .. ..	401
XVII.—Of the stipulations of slaves .. ..	357
XVIII.—Of the different kinds of stipulation .. ..	297
XIX.—Of invalid stipulations .. ..	298, 348
XX.—Of fidejussors .. ..	364
XXI.—Of the obligation <i>litteris</i> .. ..	301
XXII.—Of obligation by consent .. ..	302
XXIII.—Of purchase and sale .. ..	312
XXIV.—Of letting and hiring .. ..	319
XXV.—Of partnership .. ..	325
XXVI.—Of mandate .. ..	330



TITLE	PAGE
XXVII.—Of quasi-contractual obligations .. .. .	368
XXVIII.—Of the persons through whom obligations are acquired ..	358
XXIX.—Of the modes in which obligations are determined .. ..	408

#### BOOK IV

I.—Of obligations which arise from delict .. .. .	377
II.—Of robbery .. .. .	381
III.—Of the <i>lex Aquilia</i> .. .. .	390
IV.—Of injuries .. .. .	384
V.—Of quasi-delictual obligations .. .. .	394
VI.—Of actions .. .. .	446
VII.—Of contracts made with persons in power .. .. .	354
VIII.—Of noxal actions .. .. .	397
IX.—Of damage by quadrupeds .. .. .	399
X.—Of representatives in litigation .. .. .	468
XI.—Of taking security .. .. .	469
XII.—Of actions perpetual and temporal and what actions may be brought by and against heirs .. .. .	455
XIII.—Of exceptions .. .. .	456
XIV.—Of replications .. .. .	458
XV.—Of interdicts .. .. .	465
XVI.—Of the penalties incurred by reckless litigation .. ..	470
XVII.—Of the office of the judge .. .. .	470
XVIII.—Of public proceedings .. .. .	471

[The following passages are translated from the Institutes of Gaius, *viz* :—

Book I : s. 4, p. 6 ; s. 67, p. 72 ; s. 119, p. 113 ; s. 132 (in part), p. 71 ; ss. 192, 190 (in part), p. 88.

Book II : ss. 24, 25, pp. 115–16 ; ss. 52–58, p. 120 ; s. 84, p. 152 ; s. 103, p. 181.

Book III : ss. 154, 154a, 154b, pp. 324–25 ; ss. 173, 174, 175, p. 405 ; s. 184, p. 372 ; ss. 188, 192, 193, p. 374.

Book IV : s. 17, p. 415 ; s. 17a, p. 416 ; ss. 17b, 18, 19, p. 417 ; ss. 26, 27, 28, 29, p. 420 ; ss. 40, 41, 42, 43, pp. 431–32 ; ss. 119, 131, p. 437.]

## CHRONOLOGY

## THE MONARCHY

B C		PAGE
753	Foundation of Rome	1
510	Expulsion of the last king	4

## THE REPUBLIC

509	Lex Valeria de provocazione	4
494	Tribunate instituted	14
451-449	The Decemvirate—Law of the Twelve Tables	6
445	Lex Canuleia	61
443	Censorship instituted	13
390	Rome burnt by the Gauls	1
367	Licinian rogations—one consul to be a plebeian	10
366	Praetorship instituted	10
	Curule aedileship instituted	10, 13
342	Lex Genucia prohibits interest on loans	285
339	Lex Publilia Philonis	4
304	Jus Flavianum	9
300	Lex Ogulnia	9
287	Lex Hortensia	5, 42
287 (?)	Lex Aquilia	386, 390
280	Tib Coruncanius consul	9
242	Second praetorship instituted	10
204	Lex Cincia	144
200 c	Lex Plaetoria	89
198	Jus Aelianum	9
168	Lex Voconia	201, 234
133	Publius Mucius Scaevola consul (one of the "founders" of the Civil Law)	9
120 c	Lex Aebutia	421
95	Quintus Mucius Scaevola consul	9
91-88	The Social War	52, 67
90	Lex Julia extending citizenship	62
89	Lex Plautia Papiria	62
	Lex Pompeia confers Latin status on Transpadane Gaul	52
81-79	L Cornelius Sulla dictator—	
	Lex Cornelia de sicariis	46, 472
	de falsis vel testamentaria	203, 472
	de injuriis	383
67	Lex Cornelia de edictis perpetuis	10
66	Aquilius Gallus introduces the exceptio doli	281
63	Cicero consul Julius Caesar pontifex maximus	6, 14
52	Lex Pompeia de parricidis	58, 472
51.	Servius Sulpicius Rufus consul First commentary on the praetor's edict	11

B.C.		PAGE
44.	Julius Caesar murdered .. .. .	14
40.	Lex Falcidia .. .	234
31.	Battle of Actium .. .	14
27.	Octavian "restores the Republic" .. .	14

## THE EMPIRE

### FIRST IMPERIAL PERIOD—THE DIARCHY

	AUGUSTUS .. .	B.C. 27—A.D. 14
	TIBERIUS .. .	14—37
	GAIUS (CALIGULA) .. .	37—41
	CLAUDIUS .. .	41—54
	NERO .. .	54—68
18-17.	Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus.—de adulteriis ..	65, 472
	de fundo dotali .. .	50
	Leges Juliae judicariae .. .	421
	Lex Julia ambitus—de annona—repetundarum—de residuis	473
8.	Lex Julia majestatis—peculatus—de vi publica et privata ..	472
2.	Lex Fufia Caninia .. .	53
A.D.		
4.	Lex Aelia Sentia .. .	53
9.	Lex Papia Poppaea .. .	50, 88, 202
16.	S.C. Libonianum .. .	203
19.	Lex Junia Norbana .. .	51, 202
26.	Lex Junia Velleia .. .	206
44-49.	Lex Claudia abolishing agnatic tutelage of women ..	88
46.	S.C. Vellaeianum .. .	363
52.	S.C. Claudianum .. .	45
54-68.—	S.C. Neronianum .. .	225
56.	S.C. Trebellianum .. .	288
	GALBA .. .	68-69
	OTHO .. .	69
	VITELLIUS .. .	69
	VESPASIAN .. .	69-79
	TITUS .. .	78-81
	DOMITIAN .. .	81-96
	NERVA .. .	96-98
	TRAJAN .. .	98-117
	HADRIAN .. .	117-138
	ANTONINUS PIUS .. .	138-161
	MARCUS AURELIUS .. .	161-180
	COMMODUS .. .	180-192
69-79.	S.S. Macedonianum .. .	411
73 c.	S.C. Pegasianum .. .	238, 242

A.D.		PAGE
117-138.	S C. Tertullianum .. .. .	256
	Epistola Hadriani—benefit of division between sureties ..	361
130 c.	Consolidation of the edict .. .. .	15
161.	Gaius floruit .. .. .	30
178.	S.C. Orfitianum .. .. .	257
	SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS .. .. .	193-211
	CARACALLA (ANTONINUS) .. .. .	211-217
	ALEXANDER SEVERUS .. .. .	222-235
195.	Oratio Severi on powers of tutors .. .. .	86
206.	Oratio of Caracalla on gifts between husband and wife ..	144
212.	Constitutio Antoniniana extending citizenship to the whole Roman world .. .. .	53, 108
	Papinian put to death by Caracalla .. .. .	17
228.	Ulpian murdered by the Praetorian Guard .. .. .	17

## SECOND IMPERIAL PERIOD—ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

	DIOCLETIAN .. .. .	284-305
	CONSTANTINE I .. .. .	306-337
	THEODOSIUS I .. .. .	378-395
300 c.	Codex Gregorianus .. .. .	23
	Codex Hermogenianus .. .. .	23
313.	"Edict of Milan"—death of Diocletian .. .. .	18
324-337.	Constantine sole emperor .. .. .	18
330.	transfers capital of Empire to Byzantium .. .. .	18
	permits legitimization by subsequent marriage .. .. .	66
342.	Abolition of the formulary procedure? .. .. .	444
364.	First partition of the Empire .. .. .	18
389.	Constitution against forcible entry .. .. .	122
392-395.	Theodosius I sole emperor .. .. .	18
	Final partition of the Empire .. .. .	18

## THE DIVIDED EMPIRE

	<i>West</i>	
	VALENTINIAN III .. .. .	425-455
	<i>East</i>	
	THEODOSIUS II .. .. .	408-450
	LEO I .. .. .	457-474
	ZENO .. .. .	474-491
	ANASTASIUS .. .. .	491-518
410.	Rome sacked by the Goths .. .. .	19
	<i>Legislation of Theodosius II</i>	
410.	Perpetual tutelage of women discontinued? .. .. .	89
424.	Limitation of actions .. .. .	121, 427
426.	The Law of Citations .. .. .	17
428.	Pactum dotale made actionable .. .. .	146
438.	Codex Theodosianus .. .. .	23

A.D.	PAGE
439. Testamentum tripertitum .. .. .	183
449. Legislation on divorce .. .. .	65
455. Rome sacked by the Vandals .. .. .	19
472. Leo's legislation on the stipulation .. .. .	294
474.       on treasure .. .. .	136
476. End of the Western Empire (approximately) .. .. .	19
480 c. Zeno's legislation on emphyteusis .. .. .	169
500 c. Lex Romana Burgundionum .. .. .	19
Edict of Theoderic .. .. .	19
502. Legislation of Anastasius on emancipation .. .. .	73
506. Breviary of Alaric (Lex Romana Visigothorum) .. .. .	19
Lex Anastasiana on purchase of rights of action .. .. .	403
527. Justinian emperor .. .. .	23
529. Codex vetus .. .. .	24
533. Institutes .. .. .	24
Digest or Pandects .. .. .	24
534. Codex repetitae praelectionis .. .. .	25
546. Death of Tribonian .. .. .	25
565. Death of Justinian .. .. .	25
900 c. The Basilica .. .. .	29
1100 c. Irnerius writes glosses on the texts of the Roman Law .. .. .	20
1260. Death of Accursius, the last of the glossators .. .. .	21
1453. End of the Eastern Empire .. .. .	19

*Laws of Uncertain Date*

Lex Apuleia .. .. .	362
Atilia .. .. .	85
Atinia .. .. .	117
Calpurnia .. .. .	417
Cicereia .. .. .	363
Cornelia .. .. .	197
Cornelia de sponsu .. .. .	363
Fabia de plagiariis .. .. .	473
Furia de sponsu .. .. .	362
Furia testamentaria .. .. .	233, 419
Hostilia .. .. .	468
Julia et Plautia .. .. .	117
Julia et Titia .. .. .	94
Licinnia .. .. .	416
Marcia .. .. .	419
Minicia .. .. .	67
Petronia .. .. .	46
Pinaria .. .. .	415
Publilia de sponsu .. .. .	362
Scribonia .. .. .	160
Silia .. .. .	417
Vallia .. .. .	419
Plebiscitum Atinianum .. .. .	14
Senatusconsultum Afnianum .. .. .	262

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# ELEMENTS OF ROMAN LAW

## INTRODUCTION

### I. HISTORICAL SKETCH

1. According to the traditional story Rome was founded in B.C. 753, and from that date until B.C. 510 was ruled by kings. This is the earliest or regal period of Roman history. But since most ancient monuments and records must have perished when Rome was burnt by the Gauls,<sup>1</sup> *circ.* B.C. 390, and what passes for the history of this time was largely a fabrication of later ages, or at best a vague tradition, adorned with stories of gods and heroes, we cannot have any exact knowledge of the course of events. We may, however, form some picture of the state of society. The law was customary, not enacted, and when we find rules or institutions attributed to Romulus or another of the early kings all that we can conclude is that they were of a high antiquity, or, at least, were thought to be so in later ages. The social unit was the patriarchal family, in which the highest living ascendant was sole proprietor<sup>2</sup> and at the same time judge and priest. Kinship was agnatic, that is, reckoned exclusively through males. The family consisted of a group subject to the power of a living male ascendant (*paterfamilias*). The agnates comprised these and all others known to be descended through males from a common ancestor no longer living. Outside these was the *gens* or clan, whose members had a common name and a common worship, and supposed themselves related to one another by descent from a common ancestor, though the relationship was imaginary or too remote to be traced.

2. The organisation of the community was of a type which is not uncommon in primitive societies, and is familiar to readers of Homer's *Iliad*. It consisted of three elements—King, Council or Senate, and People. The king held office for life, chosen by the people, or nominated by his predecessor.<sup>3</sup> He was leader in war, chief judge and chief priest. The Senate was an advisory body, chosen by, or imposed upon, the king.

<sup>1</sup> Liv. 6. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Or "visible steward of the family possessions". Maine, *Ancient Law*, p. 248. Cp. Inst. 2. 19. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law*, p. 17.



The popular element was the Comitia or Assembly of the People. The People was distributed into thirty lesser units, called curiae, and the assembly was similarly constituted, each curia casting one vote. This body—the comitia curiata—is represented as giving its assent to measures proposed to it by the king; but it is more probable that it rarely, if ever, passed laws of general application; its function was rather to authorise particular departures from settled custom, *e.g.*, to allow a citizen to adopt into his family, and therefore into his potestas (§ 75), another citizen of independent status (*adrogatio*: § 98), or to sanction a disposition of property by will (*testamentum comitiis calatis*, § 264), contrary to the usual rule of intestacy, or to give effect to other processes intimately connected with the constitution of the Roman family.

3. Many doubts exist as to the composition of the citizen body in this early period. We read of patricians, plebeians, and clients, but the nature and origin of these distinctions are obscure. It was formerly thought that the patricians constituted the original citizen body, and that the plebeians consisted of a rabble of fugitive aliens or manumitted slaves without civic rights or duties. But this view has not remained unquestioned. It is said that the distinction between patricians and plebeians “appears as far back in Roman history as we can go, and in all times of which we know anything for certain, the plebeians were citizens—unprivileged citizens, no doubt, but not mere resident foreigners”.<sup>4</sup> The clients may be regarded as occupying an intermediate position. They enjoyed the protection of the patrician houses at the expense of personal dependence. Every client had his patron. The bond which united them was held to be sacred. The Law of the Twelve Tables declared accursed the patron who wronged a client and Virgil in the *Aeneid* assigns to him a special place in hell.<sup>5</sup> The institution of clientage was not peculiar to Rome; it occurs also in Latium generally, and other parts of Italy, and in Greece. Indeed, such a relation easily arises wherever economic and social conditions weigh heavily upon a section of the community.

4. Servius Tullius, last but one of the kings of Rome, is credited with the creation of a new popular assembly, known as the comitia centuriata. This is the main feature in the so-called Servian constitution, which some historians have attributed to a later date. It is represented to us as

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<sup>4</sup> Jolowicz, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Aeneid*, vi. 609.

an organisation of the people on a military, and at the same time economic, basis, into five classes of infantry, each subdivided into smaller units called centuries (in the first class 80, in the second third and fourth each 20, in the fifth 30). Voting was by centuries, and the first or richest class together with the 18 centuries of cavalry (equites) had a voting power which outweighed all the other classes together. The cavalry voted first, then the classes in order. If the centuries of the cavalry and of the first class agreed amongst themselves, as they usually would, the matter was concluded and no further vote was taken. The whole scheme depended upon the ownership of land, later of property in general,<sup>6</sup> individuals being assigned to each class in a descending scale of wealth. The new assembly pushed the comitia curiata into the background. This lost any legislative functions it may have had, but continued to be convoked to give formal authority to the higher magistrates at the beginning of their term of office (*lex curiata de imperio*), and under the name of comitia calata so late as the time of Gaius (§ 39) still met to give formal sanction to adrogations and wills,<sup>7</sup> and for other purposes affecting the family religion or otherwise of religious significance. These proceedings were controlled by the college of pontiffs, but the fiction of an assembly of the curiae was maintained by the attendance of thirty lictors, one from each curia. Cicero refers to this practice in connection with a meeting of the comitia curiata held for the purpose of taking the auspices.<sup>8</sup> The farce was carried still further when it was possible to suggest that three augurs had been asked to swear to a meeting of the comitia which in fact had never taken place.<sup>9</sup>

5. *LEGES REGIAE*.—We have observed above that it is unlikely that there was anything that could be called legislation in the period of the kings. However, Pomponius, a jurist of the time of Hadrian, who, in a long passage cited in the Digest (§ 32), is our principal source of information as to this early period of legal history, tells us that Romulus and the later kings laid projects of law before the comitia curiata. "All of these", he says, "are extant in the book of Sextus Papirius", whom he describes as contemporary with the last king of Rome, and who may be the same as a Papirius elsewhere mentioned as first pontifex maximus of the Republic. "This book", he continues, "is called the *jus civile* Papir-

<sup>6</sup> Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, p. 222.

<sup>7</sup> G. 1. 99; 2. 101.

<sup>8</sup> Cic. *de leg. agr.* II. 12. 31.

<sup>9</sup> Cic. *Epist. ad Attic* IV. 17 (18). 2.

ianum; not that Papirius introduced into it anything of his own, but because he reduced to order statutes which had been passed without system".<sup>10</sup> If this is true, enacted law goes back to the time of the kings; but the story is generally discredited, and it is thought that the collection in question was made in a much later age. In any event, it was probably of a religious character or belonged to "the borderland between law and religion".<sup>11</sup>

6. The monarchy came to an end—so the story goes—with the expulsion in B.C. 510 of Tarquinius Superbus, the last of the kings. The single ruler with a life tenure was replaced by two annual officers called at first praetors, later consuls. A phantom king was retained for religious purposes. "In order that the national gods might not refuse to the kingless city the protection which they gave to the royal city the so-called rex sacrorum was left in the ancient royal residence called the regia".<sup>12</sup> But all other functions of kingship passed to the new officers. An important consequence of the substitution of two annual magistrates for the single magistrate holding office for life was the increased power of the Senate, which was the most permanent element in the constitution. Its members were nominated by the consuls, later by the censors (§ 17). In practice it came to consist, for the most part, of ex-magistrates. Originally a purely patrician body, it changed its character as plebeians, in the course of a long struggle between the two "orders", obtained access to the higher magistracies. It was the practice for the magistrates to consult the Senate on all matters of importance, so that it became the permanent executive of the Roman State. This body, or, more precisely, its patrician nucleus, gave a formal sanction to laws passed by the assembly. This was called the *auctoritas patrum*. By the *lex Publilia Philonis* of B.C. 339 it had to be given before, not after, a measure had been submitted to the people. It is commonly said that this law reduced the privilege of the patrician members of the Senate to a mere formality. Whether it did so or not, the rapidly increasing preponderance of plebeians in the Senate soon had this effect.<sup>13</sup>

7. *LEX-PLEBISCITUM*.—Another consequence of the abolition of the monarchy was the increased importance of the popular assembly. Its functions were electoral, legislative and judicial. It elected the consuls. It passed laws of general application.

<sup>10</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Jolowicz, p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> Girard, p. 22, also called rex sacrificulus, Liv. 2. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Greenidge, p. 125.

By a measure under the name of *lex Valeria de provocatione* attributed to the first year of the Republic, but probably of later date, it entertained appeals from capital sentences passed upon a citizen. Early in the Republic a new body came into existence called the *comitia tributa*, an assembly of the people organised on a basis of tribes or local divisions. Distinct from this, again, was a body called the meeting of the plebs (*concilium plebis*), which consisted exclusively of plebeians. It chose the tribunes (§ 19), and passed resolutions called *plebiscita*, which originally bound the plebeians only, but by the *lex Hortensia* of B.C. 287 were made binding upon the whole people and so acquired the force of law.<sup>14</sup> The same effect is attributed to two earlier statutes (one more instance of the uncertainty which attaches to all this period of Roman history). We get the surprising result that part of the community asserted and secured power to legislate for the whole, and that there were four types of assembly in theory or in fact competent to make laws for the whole people, viz. 1, *comitia curiata*; 2, *comitia centuriata*; 3, *comitia tributa*; 4, *concilium plebis*. But the first, as we have seen, was a legislative body in form only, while the second and third were the popular assembly variously organised. In the second half of the third century B.C. a measure of reform, of which the details are obscure, reorganised the *comitia centuriata* so as to bring it into conformity with the distribution of the people in tribes with a consequent increase in the influence upon the vote of the inferior classes in the Servian constitution.<sup>15</sup> Before Mommsen (§ 28), the distinction between the *comitia tributa populi* and the *concilium plebis* had escaped the attention of historians, and with the constant diminution in the number of the patrician families was, in fact, ultimately of little importance. But these bodies were formally distinct, and continued to be so until they ceased to function in the early days of the Empire.<sup>16</sup> The *comitia centuriata* was convoked (usually) by a consul (§ 15), the *comitia tributa* by a consul or praetor (§15a), the *concilium plebis* by a tribune (§ 19). In the later Republic the *concilium plebis* was the normal vehicle of legislation, and its enactments were termed *leges* (no longer *plebiscita*). The *comitia centuriata* was summoned to vote upon questions of peace or war, or otherwise of constitutional importance, and once in every four or five years passed the law which invested the censors with their functions (*lex de censoria potestate*).

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<sup>14</sup> Inst. I. 2. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Girard, p. 36; Jolowicz, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Grenidge, Appendix I.

8. **SENATUSCONSULTA.**—In addition to the above-mentioned modes of legislation, the Senate by virtue of its authority as the motive power of the executive, passed resolutions called *senatusconsulta*, which were directed to suspending the law in case of urgency or dispensing with it in favour of individuals,<sup>17</sup> or assumed the form of advice, practically instruction, to a magistrate. In particular, the Praetor, if desired to do so, would incorporate such a recommendation in his Edict (§ 12). This was, in effect, legislation promoted by the Senate. Under the early Empire *senatusconsulta* came to have an independent validity as a source of civil law (§ 20). But to conservative sentiment this seemed an encroachment upon the legislative prerogative of the Roman People, and so Gaius wrote: "A *senatusconsultum* is what is ordered and established by the Senate, and it has the force of a statute, though this was formerly called in question".<sup>18</sup> During the Republic in times of crisis the Senate on several occasions passed a resolution known as the *senatusconsultum ultimum* directing the consuls and other magistrates "to look to it that the commonwealth takes no harm". It was in reliance upon such a resolution that Cicero, as consul, put to death without trial Catiline's principal associates in the conspiracy of B.C. 63. His enemies had their revenge five years later when they procured his banishment on the ground that he had exceeded his constitutional powers.<sup>19</sup>

9. **THE TWELVE TABLES.**—The first certain landmark in the history of Roman Law is the Law of the Twelve Tables. The plebeians complained that knowledge of the law was withheld from them, and that its administration by patrician consuls was arbitrary and tyrannical. In the year B.C. 462 Gaius Terentilius Arsa, one of the tribunes, proposed measures of reform. After ten years of fierce controversy and civil commotion an agreement was come to. Commissioners were to be appointed to draw up a code of laws. But first three delegates were sent to Greece to inquire into the laws and institutions of the Greek States and particularly to investigate the famous code of laws which Solon had given to Athens.<sup>20</sup> Such, at least, is Livy's account of the matter; how far historically correct is questioned. After the return of the commission ten men, all patricians, were appointed to hold office during the following year. There was to be no appeal to the people from their decisions, and the functions of the

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<sup>17</sup> Gnaid, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> G. 1. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Jolowicz, p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> Liv. 3. 31.

other magistrates were to be in suspense. The ten men—*decem viri*—commonly known as the “*Decemvirs*”, drew up ten tables of laws which were submitted to and approved by the *comitia centuriata* (B.C. 451). But their task was incomplete. A new commission of ten, this time including some plebeians, was appointed for the following year. They produced two additional tables, which Cicero describes as of an inequitable character.<sup>21</sup> When their term of office was over, they continued to exercise a usurped authority during another year, until a popular rising overthrew them and re-established the old constitution (B.C. 449). Nevertheless, the newly elected consuls submitted to the *comitia* the two last Tables, which, together with the first ten, constituted “The Law of the Twelve Tables”. This was looked upon by the Romans of later ages as the starting point of their legal history, “the fountain”, Livy calls it, “of all public and private law”.<sup>22</sup> When Cicero was young schoolboys learnt it by heart,<sup>23</sup> and it was commented upon by jurists of the late Republic and early Empire, including Labeo (§ 23) and Gaius (§ 39). It remained formally in force until superseded by Justinian’s legislation, nearly ten centuries later.

10. The Law of the Twelve Tables is usually spoken of as a code, but it was far from being a codification of the whole law. Perhaps it dealt with matters of current controversy and left untouched principles which had not been called in question. But as to this we have no certain knowledge, and we cannot say what changes the Tables made in the law. Our knowledge of their contents is derived from fragmentary citations, references and descriptions, to be found in legal literature, or in the works of Cicero and other ancient writers. Though, therefore, we have not enough material to reconstruct the Tables in their original form, and though we know little as to their order and arrangement, nevertheless the fragments which in one form or another have come down to us, convey an impression which we can rely upon as tolerably complete and accurate. It is a picture of a primitive agricultural society, in which government has scarcely emerged from the stage of regulated self-help, in which law has not yet been disentangled from religion, in which the sinister exercise of magic is a thing to be guarded against and visited with religious sanctions. On the other hand, the provisions forbidding excessive expenditure on funerals, said to be derived from the laws of Solon, seem to point to increasing wealth and

<sup>21</sup> Cic. *de Rep.* II. 61. In particular, marriage between patricians and plebeians was prohibited (§ 83).

<sup>22</sup> Liv. 3. 34.

<sup>23</sup> Cic. *de Leg.* 2. 23, 59.

inequality in its distribution. Modern editors, beginning with Jacques Godefroy (Gothofredus) early in the seventeenth century, have attempted to assign the fragments to their appropriate Table and by so doing have, if nothing else, reduced them to system. They are found to relate to: Civil Procedure and Execution (Tables 1, 2 and 3); Patria potestas (Table 4); Tutelage, Inheritance and Property (Tables 5, 6 and 7); Crimes (Table 8); Public Law (Table 9); Sacred Law (Table 10); with two further Tables described as an appendix. But this reconstruction is wholly artificial, and is useful merely as a general indication of the scope of the decemviral legislation, so far as we have knowledge of its contents.

[The problem of the Twelve Tables raises many difficulties. Besides questions of date, text and interpretation there is the question of social and economic background. The late Professor Tenney Frank, who concluded from the evidence of archæology that "at the close of the regal period Rome was a large and busy commercial city", wrote "We must ask the students of law to modernise their ideas of what Rome was like in B.C. 450 and to interpret their fragments in the light of this new knowledge". (*Social Behaviour in Ancient Rome*, Harvard University Press, (1932, pp. 128, 125.) But *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. VII (1928), p. 467, adheres to the traditional view that "the picture outlined by the surviving fragments of the Twelve Tables is one of an agricultural community". Mr. A. S. Diamond in his challenging book *Primitive Law* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1935) reduces the Twelve Tables to "a school-book used by the priestly order", compiled from earlier materials about the year B.C. 190 (p. 142).]

11. INTERPRETATIO.—Law of whatever kind calls for interpretation, and those who are accepted as interpreters of the law necessarily influence its development. For about a century after the enactment of the Twelve Tables the interpretation of the law and of the actions founded upon it was in the hands of the college of pontiffs.<sup>24</sup> To this period may be referred the development of the law by legal fictions, that is, contrivances by which a legal rule or institution is diverted from its original purpose to accomplish indirectly some other object, as we shall see in the case of adoption (§ 104), emancipation (§ 109), and in jure cessio (§ 153).<sup>25</sup> The ascendancy of the pontiffs came to an end in B.C. 304 when, according to the story, one Gnaeus Flavius, secretary of Appius Claudius (censor in 312), stole his master's manuscript and made public the forms of action appropriate to each state of circumstances,<sup>26</sup> a secret up till then jealously guarded by the priesthood. Perhaps his master was privy to the "theft". This

<sup>24</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Girard, p. 49.

<sup>26</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 7.

completed the process begun by the Twelve Tables. The law and above all its use in practice was no longer hidden in the bosom of the priests. From having been religious, it became secular, and public property. It is perhaps not unreasonable to see some connection between the publication of this so-called *jus Flavianum* and the *lex Ogulnia* of B.C. 300 which for the first time admitted plebeians to the pontifical college.<sup>27</sup> A further step in the same direction was taken by Tiberius Coruncanius, consul, B.C. 280, first plebeian pontifex maximus, B.C. 253, who, as Pomponius tells us, was the first to profess law publicly,<sup>28</sup> which seems to mean that he held himself out to give consultations accompanied by instruction to students of law, a sort of legal hospital practice. A second publication enlarging the work of Gnaeus Flavius, to which Pomponius gives the name of *jus Aelianum*,<sup>29</sup> is attributed to Sextus Aelius, consul B.C. 198. He was also (or is it another name for the same thing?) the author of a work called *Tripertita*,<sup>30</sup> which expounded the civil law under three heads, 1. The Law of the Twelve Tables; 2. the interpretation of the same, 3. statute actions (*legis actiones*, § 653). This was the earliest systematic treatise on the civil law, containing, as Pomponius says, "a cradle of the law". The jurists of this early period, who are referred to in later writings as the *veteres*, or ancients, engaged in activities which are described in semi-technical language as *respondere*, *cavere*, *scribere*, *agere*. They advised clients, or the magistrates, or judges (*respondere*). They saw that legal forms were properly employed and drafted legal instruments (*cavere—scribere*). They undertook the general conduct of litigation (*agere*).<sup>31</sup> But the task of argument in Court was reserved to another class of men, known as advocates, who, as will appear from a story to be related below, were not always conspicuous for their knowledge of law. The earliest legal literature, as is always the case, consisted in books of practice, such as the *Tripertita*. Works of a scientific character belong to a later date. The family of the *Mucii Scaevolæ* produced many distinguished lawyers. Publius Mucius Scaevola (consul B.C. 133, later pontifex maximus) and with him Brutus and Manilius, are named as "founders of the civil law".<sup>32</sup> But it was his son Quintus Mucius Scaevola, consul B.C. 95, and, like his father, pontifex maximus, who first made a digest of

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<sup>27</sup> Jolowicz, p. 88.

<sup>28</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 35, 38.

<sup>29</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 38.

<sup>31</sup> Girard, p. 50; Buckl. M. p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 39.



the civil law, which he arranged under heads in eighteen books.<sup>33</sup> This was the basis of most of the later works on the *jus civile*.<sup>34</sup> It is frequently cited by the writers of the classical period in the excerpts preserved in Justinian's Digest (§ 32).

12. MAGISTRATUUM EDICTA.—In the year 367 the measures of reform known as the Licinian Laws or Rogations proposed by the tribunes Sextius and Licinius had provided *inter alia* that one consul must always be a plebeian. The patricians sought to mitigate the effect of this enactment by creating new offices, the curule aedileship (of which we shall speak below) and the praetorship, reviving for this the name anciently borne by the consuls. The praetor was to be a colleague of the consuls, but specifically for the administration of justice.<sup>35</sup> This took effect in 366. About 242 a second praetor was instituted to administer justice in cases in which one or both parties were aliens. The first came to be known as the praetor urbanus, the second as the praetor peregrinus. All the higher magistrates of the Roman People had authority to issue edicts or administrative orders dealing with matters within their competence, and the praetors, in particular after the *lex Aebutia* (§ 672), and perhaps before, at the beginning of their term of office issued an edict in which they stated the rules of procedure by which they intended to be governed in the coming year. These were inscribed on wooden tables in black letters with a white background (whence the description of the document as the praetor's *album*) with red captions (*rubricæ*) and posted in the forum. This edict, being intended to remain in force during the praetor's year of office, was known as the perpetual edict (*edictum perpetuum*) by way of contrast with edicts of a merely occasional nature. As was natural, a praetor would adopt, in the main, the edict of his predecessor, modifying or enlarging it as seemed desirable. Thus the great mass of the edict went on unaltered from year to year and became a perpetual edict in a larger sense. In this connection it is called the *edictum tralatitium*, or the edict "handed on", while any new matter was known as *edictum novum*. But it happened from time to time that magistrates arbitrarily departed from the terms of their edict. Verres in Sicily had been particularly outrageous in this as in countless other matters: Accordingly a *lex Cornelia* of B.C. 67 required that praetors should abide by their edict during their term of office. This assured to the edict a

<sup>33</sup> Dig. 1, 2, 2, 41.

<sup>34</sup> Jolowicz, p. 90.

<sup>35</sup> *Praetorem jura reddentem et collegam consulibus*. Liv. 7. 1. \*

stability which it was in danger of losing. The praetor could not, properly speaking, make law, because he had no legislative authority, but owing to his control of procedure he was able to make fundamental changes in the legal system, as, for instance, in the matter of intestate succession, and the praetor's edict became the source of a system of equity which existed side by side with the civil law without being absorbed in it, just as the equity of the English Chancellor existed side by side with the common law. It was due to this influence more than to any other that the law of Rome was transformed from a narrow technical system into a system fit to meet the demands of a growing civilisation and an expanding empire. But the praetor in framing his edict did not exercise an arbitrary discretion. Though, like every educated Roman, he would have some knowledge of law, he was not necessarily a highly skilled lawyer. He was expected, therefore, to consult his *consilium*, a body of expert advisers, and he was, of course, controlled by public and professional opinion.<sup>36</sup>

13. Besides the edicts of the two praetors and a provincial edict which varied in detail in the several provinces, there was the edict of the *curule aediles* (§ 16). These were officers charged with the police of the city and the control of the markets. Rules introduced by them in the law of sale have left their impress on those modern systems of law which have inherited the Roman tradition (§ 466). The law (for such in effect it was)<sup>37</sup> contained in the edicts was known 1. 2. 7 as the *jus honorarium*, because it proceeded from the holders of offices (*honores*). "The Edict", when the term is used without qualification, means the edict of the urban praetor.

14. The Edict, like the civil law, was the subject of systematic comment. The earliest treatise of the kind was the work of Servius Sulpicius Rufus, consul in B.C. 51, who "left two very short books bearing the title 'On the Edict'"; but he wrote much besides, for he is said to have left about one hundred and eighty books.<sup>38</sup> As an orator he enjoyed a reputation second, if to anyone, only to Cicero. He is said to have taken up the study of law in consequence of a reproach of Quintus Mucius, who said that it was a disgrace that a patrician, a noble and an orator should be unacquainted

<sup>36</sup> Maine, *Ancient Law*, p. 66.

<sup>37</sup> Some claimed for the Edict that it was a *lex annua*. Cic. in *Verr.* 2. 1. 42 (109). But in *de Invent.* 2. 22. 67 Cicero ascribes the rules of the Edict to custom (*consuetudo*). Justinian includes *magistratuum edicta* under *jus scriptum* (§ 53).

<sup>38</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 43, 44. "Books" here means parchment rolls.

with the law which was his daily concern. During the early Empire commentaries on the Edict occupied an important place in legal literature. It is sufficient to refer to that of Ulpian in 81, and that of Paul in 78, books, both of which were extensively drawn upon to supply the material of Justinian's Digest (§ 33). Gaius was the author of a treatise on the provincial edict in thirty books and of another in two books on the edict of the curule aediles. He also commented upon the Edict of the urban praetor in numerous separate titles. There is no record of a commentary upon the edict of the peregrine praetor, and, indeed, with regard to this surprisingly little is known.<sup>39</sup>

15. Before passing from the Republic to the Empire, occasion may be taken to say a few words about the magistracies of the Republic, most of which have been incidentally mentioned already.<sup>40</sup> The principal inheritors of the royal authority and dignity were the two consuls elected by the comitia centuriata. They enjoyed equal powers. In the calendar the year was distinguished by their names. They convoked and initiated legislation in either comitia. In special emergencies, particularly in times of grave crisis, either consul might appoint a dictator who exercised supreme authority, but not beyond six months, unless reappointed. This was, in effect, a temporary reversion to monarchy. Under the Empire the consulship became a dignified sinecure. The emperors made appointments to the office and frequently held it themselves. It was abolished by Justinian in A.D. 541, though later emperors continued to assume the title.

15A. The praetors are described as colleagues, but minor colleagues, of the consuls. Like the consuls they were competent to command armies, to initiate legislation in either comitia, to summon, and transact business with, the Senate. But while the consuls exercised an unlimited imperium derived from the monarchy, the praetors, apart from these general powers, were confined to the special sphere of action assigned to them by lot after their election to office, and they were subject to the consular veto.<sup>41</sup> Mention has been

<sup>39</sup> Girard, p. 59, n. 3.

<sup>40</sup> For further detail see Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, and Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction to Roman Law*.

<sup>41</sup> An amazing feature of the Roman constitution was the power of magistrates to forbid by anticipation or to annul *ex post facto* the acts of other magistrates of subordinate and in the second case also of equal authority. The first is *coercitio*, the second *intercessio*, but the term *intercessio* or "veto" is commonly applied to both. For particulars see Greenidge, p. 173 ff. The tribunician "veto" (§ 19) is a conspicuous instance.

made above of the two praetors who administered justice. Later, the number was increased to four (B.C. 227), to six (B.C. 198), and by Sulla (B.C. 81) to eight. It became the practice to retain them in Rome during their year of office to exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction. When their year of office was over they were, like ex-consuls, available to govern provinces or for other service abroad. Under the Empire a numerous body of praetors exercised judicial functions in the capital,<sup>42</sup> and we hear of special praetors appointed to deal with particular departments, such as the praetor tutularis and the praetor fideicommissarius (§ 739), charged respectively with jurisdiction in matters of guardianship and of fideicommissa (§ 346).

16. The aediles were originally plebeian officers. From B.C. 366, the year which saw the institution of the praetorship, two other aediles were appointed with a superior status. They were magistrates of the Roman People and were distinguished by the name of "curule aediles" because, like the other higher magistrates, they sat in a chair of state (sella curulis). Reference has already been made to their control of the markets (§ 13).

17. The censorship, instituted in B.C. 443, was an office of great dignity. The censors (two in number) were chosen every four or five years for the purpose of the census or roll of citizens. They assessed each person's means for purposes of taxation and assigned his place in century and tribe. They placed government contracts and let to farm the sources of revenue. About a century after the institution of the office they acquired the important function of determining the composition of the Senate. This gave them the power of expulsion from, or refusal of admission to, that body, one aspect of the general control which they exercised over public morals.

18. The office of quaestor goes back at least to the beginning of the Republic. Each year two quaestors were nominated by the consuls, later elected by the comitia tributa, to assist the consuls in matters of finance. This continued to be their principal concern, but they enlarged their functions as their numbers increased. The quaestorship was not held in such high esteem as the other magistracies of the Roman People. Custom or law prescribed a regular succession of offices through which a Roman ambitious of public distinction rose to the high dignity of consul. This

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<sup>42</sup> Jolowicz, p. 336.

was known as the *cursus honorum*. The quaestorship ranked below the curule aedileship and praetorship, which with the consulship made up the "*tergèmini honores*" of Horace.<sup>43</sup> The censorship and the office of *pontifex maximus* were usually the reward of elder statesmen, though Julius Caesar procured his election to the latter dignity at the early age of thirty-six (B.C. 63).

19. The tribunate was a plebeian office, instituted, so we are told, on the occasion of the first "secession" of the plebs in the year B.C. 494 to protect the plebeians from the arbitrary authority of patrician consuls. The tribunes were at first two, or, as some say, five, later ten. Their person was sacrosanct and consequently immune from arrest. From this seemingly modest beginning they attained a position of formidable predominance and by their power to veto and annul the acts of other magistrates (*intercessio*) found it only too easy to hold the State to ransom in the interest of party. They acquired the right to sit in the Senate<sup>44</sup> and (ultimately) to convoke it. They convoked and initiated legislation in the *concilium plebis*. It is significant of the importance attached to the office that Augustus and succeeding emperors caused themselves to be invested for life with tribunician authority. From the tribunes of the people must be distinguished military tribunes with consular power (*tribuni militares consulari potestate*). Though the consulship is said to have been re-established after the expulsion of the Decemvirs, it was in fact in abeyance more often than not during the next eighty years.<sup>45</sup> In this period the two consuls were frequently replaced by three or four or six military tribunes. This contrivance provided more magistrates competent to exercise supreme authority at home and in the field. Plebeians were eligible, so that they gained access to consular power, though not to consular office.<sup>46</sup>

20. THE LEGAL SYSTEM UNDER THE EMPIRE.—The Roman Empire may be said to date from B.C. 27 when Octavian,<sup>47</sup> great-nephew of C. Julius Caesar (murdered B.C. 44), who by his will adopted him as his son and made him his heir, after crushing the last of his rivals, Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony) in the naval battle of Actium (B.C. 31), laid down the extraordinary powers assumed during the civil wars

<sup>43</sup> Odes, l. 1. 8.

<sup>44</sup> By a plebiscitum Atinianum of the second century B.C.

<sup>45</sup> Jolowicz, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Livy, 4. 6 and 7.

<sup>47</sup> He was the son of C. Octavius. After adoption, in accordance with the usual practice, he became Julius Octavianus.

and "restored the Republic".<sup>47a</sup> This (paradoxically) marks the beginning of the Empire. The change was at first disguised. Octavian, better known as Augustus (a title of honour which has passed into a personal name), carefully retained the forms of republican government, and by concentrating numerous offices in his own hands gave a formal validity to his usurpation of power. In the first century of the Empire the old forms of legislation passed out of use (if we except the formal survival of the *comitia curiata*). *Lex* and *plebiscitum* ceased to be living sources of law, though Gaius, with a lawyer's conservatism, in the middle of the second century still speaks of them as such. They were replaced by *senatusconsulta*, but it was some time before these were recognised as definitely legislative in character, and not, as they had been under the Republic, directions to the magistrates. The earliest case of direct legislation by the Senate is said to be the *S. C. Tertullianum* of the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138).<sup>48</sup> But the *senatusconsultum* was in fact merely the expression of the Emperor's will. Indeed, the assent of the Senate became so completely a matter of form that the speech (*oratio*) in which the Emperor introduced a project of law to the Senate was regarded as having in itself binding force. Thus an important restriction on the administrative powers of tutors (§ 123) is attributed to an *oratio* of the Emperor Severus of A.D. 195.<sup>49</sup> The *senatusconsultum* persisted through the third century,<sup>50</sup> but was finally superseded by other forms of imperial legislation. The edicts of the praetors and the *curule aediles* continued to be issued year by year in the early Empire, and may have effected some small changes in the law, but even this ceased when the jurist Salvius Julianus at the instance of the Emperor Hadrian consolidated the edicts (*circ.* A.D. 130) and gave them a permanent form (*edictum perpetuum* or *Salvianum*). From this time the Edict ceased to be a living source of law. But commentaries on the Edict continued for some hundred years longer to develop the principles of Roman equity.

21. It has been already remarked that *senatusconsulta* were, in effect, dictated by the Emperor. The direct expression of the imperial will assumed different forms, *viz.*, judgments (*decreta*); answers to questions submitted (*rescripta*), which might be answers to magistrates sent by post (*epistolae*) or to private citizens (*subscriptiones*—so-called because the

<sup>47a</sup> Jolowicz, p. 329; *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. x, p. 127 ff.

<sup>48</sup> Girard, p. 62; Jolowicz, p. 369.

<sup>49</sup> Dig. 27. 9. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 15; *M.* p. 12.

G. 1. 5. Emperor's reply was written at the foot of the petition); instructions to officials (*mandata*); and orders issued in his capacity of chief magistrate (*edicta*). All these are known collectively as *constitutiones*, and Gaius shortly describes *constitutio* as "that which the emperor ordains by decree, by edict or by letter". It is remarkable that none of these processes was exclusively legislative in character.<sup>51</sup> Whether in any case it was intended to lay down a general rule had to be gathered from the tenor of the constitution and the interpretation put upon it. In the later Empire the different types of *constitutio* were merged in the absolute power of the Emperor to legislate as he pleased. The commonest forms were general laws (*leges edictales* or *generales*) and *rescripta*.

22. *RESPONSA PRUDENTIUM*.—One more source of law remains to mention, *viz.*, *responsa prudentium*. After the emancipation of the law from pontifical control a class of professional jurists came into existence who held themselves out to give opinions on points of law to all who sought their advice. These opinions were called *responsa*. They were sometimes collected by their author and published. Under the Empire this came to be a frequent type of legal literature.<sup>52</sup> During the Republic such opinions were unauthoritative. But the Emperor Augustus introduced the practice that jurists should give their answers by the Emperor's authority and under seal.<sup>53</sup> The effect seems to have been to give special weight, perhaps at first *de facto* rather than *de jure*, to the *responsa* of a limited number of privileged jurists, who enjoyed what was called the *jus* (*publice*) *respondendi*. Masurius Sabinus is said to have been the first jurist to receive such a patent of precedence, not from Augustus, however, but from his successor Tiberius. The account of the matter given by Pomponius leaves much unexplained. By the time of Gaius the replies of the jurists (*responsa prudentium*) had attained such high authority that he enumerates them amongst the sources of written law and describes them as "the decisions and opinions of persons authorised to lay down the law" (G. 1. 7. *sententiae et opiniones eorum quibus permissum est jura condere*). The practice of giving authorised *responsa* faded out in the third century.<sup>53a</sup>

23. To what extent these opinions were authoritative is difficult to say. Gaius continues: "If they are unanimous they have the force of law; if they disagree the judge may follow whichever opinion he chooses, as is ruled by a *rescript*

<sup>51</sup> Jolowicz, p. 382.

<sup>53</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 49.

<sup>52</sup> Girard, p. 71.

<sup>53a</sup> Jolowicz, p. 368.

of the Emperor Hadrian". Evidently, difficulty had arisen from the fact that the opinions of the jurists were frequently conflicting. But the question remains what opinions were counted. Perhaps, the rule meant that the judge was to take account of the opinions of living jurists who enjoyed the *jus respondendi* produced by the parties with regard to the matter in hand.<sup>54</sup> Later, the authority allowed to living jurists was extended to jurists who were no longer living, perhaps not necessarily only to such as had had the *jus respondendi*, and not only to *responsa* properly so-called, but to any of their published works. The result was that the law had to be extracted from a mass of legal literature, which, as we shall see, served as the foundation of Justinian's Digest (§ 33). These works of jurisprudence belong principally to the first 200 or 250 years of the Christian era. The rival schools of the Sabinians and Proculians, founded, it is said, by Capito and Labeo in the time of Augustus and carried on by Sabinus under Tiberius and Proculus under Nero, from whom they took their names, divided between them most or many of the jurists of the first century and a half of the Empire.<sup>55</sup> Gaius (§ 39) whose *Institutes* was written about A.D. 161, was one of the latest of the Sabinians. The greatest names in Roman jurisprudence gather round the end of the second and the beginning of the third century. Papinian, put to death in 212 by the Emperor Caracalla for refusing to justify the Emperor's murder of his brother Geta; Ulpian, assassinated by the Praetorian Guard in 228; Paulus, a contemporary of Ulpian; Modestinus, a pupil of Ulpian alive as late as 244, who passes for the last of the great classical jurists. In the late Empire the works of these and of other jurists were cited as authoritative in Courts of law with the result that the ascertainment of the law from so incoherent a mass of material was matter of great difficulty, particularly in an age in which legal science was suffering a rapid decline. Various attempts were made to meet the situation. Thus, Constantine forbade the use of Ulpian's and Paul's notes on Papinian. Finally, in 426 the Emperors Theodosius II and Valentinian III attempted a comprehensive reform by the so-called Law of Citations.<sup>56</sup> This enacted in effect as follows:—(a) All writings of Papinian, Paul, Gaius, Ulpian and Modestinus are confirmed. Gaius is to have the same authority as the others; (b) Citations made by any of the above from earlier writers are also admitted, for example from Scaevola, Sabinus, Julian and Marcellus, provided that, to

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<sup>54</sup> Girard, p. 77.

<sup>55</sup> Jolowicz, p. 384.

<sup>56</sup> Cod. Theod. 1. 4. 3; Sohm, translated by Ledlie, p. 119.



overcome the uncertainty which attaches to ancient writings, they are confirmed by a comparison of manuscripts; (c) If conflicting opinions are produced, the majority is to prevail. If the numbers on each side are equal, preference is to be given to the view favoured by Papinian. If Papinian is silent, the judge may choose for himself; (d) The notes of Ulpian and Paul on Papinian are again declared inadmissible. Paul's *Sentences* (§ 38) are to have authority. These provisions, by which opinions are to be numbered not weighed, "mark probably", says Buckland, "the lowest point reached by Roman jurisprudence".<sup>57</sup> But there was a lower point yet to come in the age which followed the destruction of the Western Empire.

24. More and more, as time went on, the dual sovereignty of Senate and Emperor, to which the name has been given of "diarchy" or "principate", was transformed into an absolute monarchy. The process was complete by the reign of Diocletian (284-305) or of his successor Constantine. Diocletian divided the Empire into four territories for the purpose of administration, and devised a too ingenious scheme, designed to secure a peaceful succession to the imperial throne. There were to be two Augusti and two Caesars, each with his own sphere of government. When an Augustus died or retired (for this also was part of the scheme) he was to be replaced by a Caesar, a new Caesar being appointed to supply the vacancy. Diocletian, who abdicated the throne in 305 and died in 313, lived to see the failure of his plan. After many years of war or insecure peace Constantine (called the Great) reigned as sole Emperor from 324 to 337. By the "Edict of Milan" (313)<sup>58</sup> Christianity was tolerated, though it was only in the last twenty years of the century that pagan rites were formally proscribed. In 330 Constantine transferred the capital of the Empire to Byzantium (Constantinople). Diocletian's abortive scheme foreshadowed the division of the Empire into the Empires of East and West. The first formal partition took place in 364 when Valentinian shared the Empire with his brother Valens. Theodosius I was, in effect, sole emperor from 392 to 395, but on his death the Empire was divided (this time finally) between his sons Arcadius and Honorius, who had been formally

<sup>57</sup> Buckl. T. p. 34.

<sup>58</sup> "When early in 313 Constantine met his ally Licinius at Milan a policy of complete religious freedom was agreed upon. Technically there was no Edict of Milan." It is "a symbolic representation of historical truth", *Cambridge Ancient History*, xii, 686.

associated with their father during the last years of his life. In theory, however, the Empire remained one and indivisible. For some time legislation ran in the name of both emperors, and was promulgated and binding in both parts of the Empire. Later, as the separation became more complete, the legislation of one part of the Empire was not current in the other unless expressly adopted.

25. In 410 Rome was taken and plundered by Alaric the Goth. About the same time Britain was left exposed to the ravages of Picts and Scots from the North and of Saxons from the East, as one adventurer after another, in making a bid for the imperial throne, denuded her of the defending legions. In 455 Rome was again sacked by the Vandals. The Western Empire was falling to pieces. The year 476, in which Romulus Augustulus was compelled to resign the throne to the barbarian Odoacer is arbitrarily assigned as the date of its overthrow, though Zeno (474-491) and Justinian for a time reasserted the authority of the Empire in the West. But this was of no long duration. The Western Empire broke up into the barbarian kingdoms built upon its ruins. The Eastern Empire continued to exist until Constantinople was taken by the Turks in 1453.

26. ROMAN LAW IN WESTERN EUROPE.—The conquerors of the Western Empire had acquired a tincture of civilisation during centuries of intercourse with the Romans. They had their own customary laws, of which various collections have come down to us, generally described as the *Leges Barbarorum*. In most of these Roman influences are apparent. They also made compilations of Roman Law. Of these we have three, all dating from about 500. Far the most important is the *Lex Romana Visigothorum* or *Breviarium Alarici* (Breviary of Alaric), issued by Alaric II, King of the Visigoths, in 506. It contains in abbreviated form a large part of the Theodosian Code (§ 32), and many post-Theodosian Novels,<sup>59</sup> an epitome in two books of the first three Books of the Institutes of Gaius, an abbreviated version of the *Sententiae* of Paul and a single extract from the *Responsa* of Papinian. The so-called *Lex Romana Burgundionum* was issued probably about the same time by King Gundobad, who had previously drawn up a code of law for his Burgundian subjects. He died in 516. The Edict of Theoderic, King of the Ostrogoths, of about the same date, unlike the other two compilations, was to govern Goths and Romans alike. The

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<sup>59</sup> i.e., new laws (§ 34).

reason of the difference was that Theoderic claimed to rule, not as conqueror, but as delegate of Zeno, Emperor of the East.

27. The Law of the Burgundians and the Edict of Theoderic are of limited scope and inferior interest. They had no abiding effect. Far different was the future of the Breviary. When it was promulgated the West-Gothic Kingdom included Spain and a great part of southern Gaul. But only a year later Alaric met with defeat and death at the hands of Clovis, King of the Franks. After this the law of the Visigoths had little validity north of the Pyrenees. In Spain it remained in force until replaced by another code in 654. But it retained a *de facto* authority, which extended far beyond its original bounds, and through abbreviations and abbreviations of abbreviations was the principal means of keeping some tradition of Roman Law alive in western Europe during the darkest period of the Middle Ages.

28. How far, if at all, the Roman Law continued to exist during these centuries was long uncertain. Savigny (*infra*) demonstrated its continuance, but much of the story remains obscure. Speaking generally, it may be said that it continued to exist in a state of solution, and with an admixture of barbarian and, later, of feudal law. "The life of Roman Law in the barbaric states", says Vinogradoff, "was upheld by the continuance of fragmentary and garbled rules, derived more or less directly from the system formed during the prosperous periods of Roman civilisation."<sup>60</sup> In Italy (or parts of it) the degeneration was not so complete. But knowledge of the sources was limited to the Institutes, the Code and the Novels (§§ 32, 34). The Digest had disappeared from sight. The revived study of Roman Law was the work of the law schools of northern Italy, Ravenna, Pavia (the University of Lanfranc, the first Norman Archbishop of Canterbury) and, particularly, Bologna, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This is the age of the jurists who are known as the glossators, because their activity took the form of inserting glosses or notes in the margin and between the lines of the texts of the Roman Law. This treatment of legal texts had been employed by the Lombard lawyers in northern Italy. It was first applied to the texts of the Roman Law by Irnerius, a grammarian of Bologna, towards the end of the eleventh century. According to the story, he was consulted by a teacher of theology as to the meaning of the text—"Nonne duo passeris asse veneunt"—"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?"<sup>61</sup>—

<sup>60</sup> *Roman Law in Mediæval Europe*, p. 36.

<sup>61</sup> *Matth. x. 29.*

and his research as to the meaning of the Roman word *as* was the beginning of a profound study of Roman law. The last of the glossators was Accursius, who died in the year 1260. Next came the post-glossators, who are reproached with having paid more attention to the gloss than to the text, but must have the credit of adapting the Roman Law to practical application in the Courts. The best known of these is Bartolus (1314–57). The revival of letters in the sixteenth century gave a fresh impulse to the study of Roman Law. The scholars of this age known as “humanists”, notably Jean Cujas (Cujacius, 1522–1590) and Hugues Doneau (Donellus, 1527–1591), professors at the University of Bourges in France, did not limit themselves to the study of the text, but called in aid whatever could be learnt from ancient literature and history. Doneau, who was a protestant, found it prudent to withdraw from France and for a time taught law in the University of Leiden in Holland, founded in 1574. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the study of Roman Law was pursued in Holland by a number of eminent jurists, amongst whom John Voet, in particular, was widely known for his Commentary on the Pandects<sup>62</sup> (1698–1704) still in use in the Union of South Africa. In France the most famous names of this period are in the seventeenth century Domat (1625–1696) and in the eighteenth Pothier (1699–1772), whose works were largely drawn upon for the compilation of Napoleon’s *Code Civil* published in 1804. In the nineteenth century Roman Law studies were prosecuted with most effect in Germany by Savigny (1779–1861), Ihering (1818–1892) and Mommsen (1817–1903), and by a host of writers who systematised the Roman Law for use in the Courts.

29. THE “RECEPTION” OF ROMAN LAW.—Leaving the history of the study of Roman Law, to consider its influence upon the administration of justice, we must take note of an event of cardinal importance in European legal history, namely, the “reception” of Roman Law in Germany and the Netherlands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It had been for centuries a pose of the German Emperors to regard themselves as successors of the rulers of the Roman Empire. But this was a flourish and a maxim of statecraft rather than an influence in forming the private law. Doubtless, for centuries, through different channels, there had been an infiltration of Roman Law into the systems of northern Europe, but this was incommensurate in scale and conse-

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<sup>62</sup> § 32.

quence with the general reception which now took place. A number of circumstances combined to bring it about. At the end of the Middle Ages, when the revival of letters and the discovery of the world had effected a revolution in every aspect of life, the old customary law, which was primitive in character and varied from province to province and from town to town, was quite inadequate to meet the needs of the time; and, if the law was unequal to the occasion, so were the Courts of the local magistrates who administered it. There was a general movement towards the creation of new Courts, or the reform of old ones, exercising a wider and appellate jurisdiction. These were constituted in increasing measure of judges who were highly trained in the system which was the universal subject of University study, the Roman Law. Notable instances of such new Courts were the Imperial Chamber (*Reichskammergericht*) created for the German Empire by Maximilian I in 1495, and the Great Council established at Mechlin by Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1473, with an appellate jurisdiction for the provinces of the Netherlands included in his dominions.<sup>63</sup> These Courts, and ultimately the local Courts as well, administered as the law of the land the Roman Law, in the form in which it had been transmitted by the glossators and post-glossators. It became the common law of Germany, and so remained, except where it had been replaced by codes, until the German civil code came into operation on January 1, 1900. The Roman Law was similarly "received", though in unequal measure, in the different provinces of the Netherlands.

30. In the south of Europe there was no "reception" of Roman Law. Rather it emerged, so to say, from the soil. It was the task of the glossators and post-glossators to adapt it to practical application in the Courts. In France from the Middle Ages a distinction was drawn between the southern provinces, in which the Roman Law in some form or another had continued to exist and which were known as the countries of the written law (*les pays du droit écrit*), and the northern provinces, where customary law existed with numerous local variations, which were known as the countries of the customary law (*les pays du droit coutumier*). But here, too, as government became more centralised, the Roman Law asserted its authority, and wherever the customary law was silent, was admitted in subsidium as law or at least as "written reason" (*ratio scripta*). This meant, in effect, that

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<sup>63</sup> Lee. p. 4.

the Roman Law occupied the whole field of Obligations. The great variety of customary law, which made Voltaire say that in France a traveller changed his law as often as he changed his horses, though to some extent mitigated by Royal Ordinances, continued to exist until the promulgation of the *Code Civil* in 1804.

31. ROMAN LAW IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE.—In the British Empire a number of systems exist which have to some extent at least a Roman Law foundation. This may be said of:—1, the customary laws of the Channel Islands; 2, the law of Scotland; 3, the pre-Napoleonic law codified in the Province of Quebec and St. Lucia in the West Indies; 4, the law of the *Code Civil* in the colonies of Mauritius and Seychelles; 5, the Roman-Dutch Law in force in South Africa and Ceylon, but, from January 1, 1917, no longer in British Guiana. There has, of course, been infiltration of Roman Law into the law of England, both common law and equity.<sup>64</sup>

32. ROMAN LAW IN THE EASTERN EMPIRE—JUSTINIAN'S LEGISLATION.—We must now revert to the Eastern Empire, where the Roman Law remained in vigour, though, doubtless, much influenced by the legal institutions of Greece and the East. By the sixth century the legislation of the Republic had receded far into the background. For centuries the imperial constitutions had been the only source of new law. This was known as *lex*. The old law still in force was to be found in the writings of the jurists, known as *jus*. *Lex* and *jus* together with custom—*consuetudo*—covered the whole field of existing law. The material both of *lex* and of *jus* was immense and unwieldy. We have seen how Valentinian and Theodosius dealt with the *jus* in the Law of Citations (§ 23). Various attempts had been made to bring order into the statute law, first by private effort in the *Codex Gregorianus* and the *Codex Hermogenianus* (both *circ.* A.D. 300), called after the names of their compilers Gregorius and Hermogenianus; later, in the official code of Theodosius II (*Codex Theodosianus*), issued in 438. We have fragments of the first two of these and a very considerable part of the third. Such was the situation when Justinian came to the throne of the Eastern Empire in 527. Inspired, perhaps, by the example of the barbarian kings (§ 26), he conceived a comprehensive project of legal reform.<sup>65</sup> To do this it was necessary to introduce order into the existing chaos. He first (528) directed attention to the *lex*, entrusting the task to a commission of ten persons, one of

<sup>64</sup> See Plucknett, *A Concise History of the Common Law*, p. 260; Potter, *Historical Introduction to English Law* (2nd ed. 1943) Appendix.

<sup>65</sup> See *Proem* to the Institutes, *infra*, p. 39.

whom was Tribonian, at that time a member of the imperial civil service. They were to make use of the earlier codes and of subsequent legislation, reducing the whole to a systematic form with necessary amendments. The result was the first edition of Justinian's Code, afterwards called the *codex vetus*, issued in 529. After this the *jus* was taken in hand. At the end of 530 a commission was issued to Tribonian, and others to be named by him (he named sixteen), ordering them "to read and revise the books on Roman Law of the ancient jurists to whom the emperors gave authority to write and interpret the laws", selecting and arranging matter of living interest and importance, rejecting all that was obsolete or unfit to be perpetuated.<sup>66</sup> In order to clear the ground a series of ordinances was issued in the years 529—531 settling questions which had been matter of controversy between the jurists, and abolishing many obsolete technicalities. The most important of these enactments were collected and issued under the name of the Fifty Decisions<sup>67</sup> (*Quinquaginta Decisiones*), but the text has not been transmitted to us. The labours of the commission resulted in a work known as the Digest or Pandects (a Greek word meaning "collection"),<sup>68</sup> published December 16, 533. It had been preceded a few weeks earlier by the *Institutiones*, commonly called the Institutes, an elementary work designed for the use of students, the composition of which, as Justinian's preface (Proem) informs us, had been entrusted to Tribonian and the law professors Theophilus and Dorotheus. It was based upon the institutional works of earlier writers, particularly Gaius, and another work of (or attributed to) the same author styled *Res Cottidianae* or *Aurea* (Law in Daily Life or Golden Sayings). The Digest, and, strangely, the Institutes as well, received the force of law from December 30, 533.

33. Some forty jurists supplied the material for the Digest, but in very unequal degree. About one third of the whole is taken from Ulpian, one half from Ulpian and Paul together, two thirds from the five jurists who occupy the place of honour in the Law of Citations. The great majority belong to what is called the classical age of Roman jurisprudence, which may be taken to extend from the beginning of the Empire to the

<sup>66</sup> The commission to Tribonian is contained in a constitution known from its opening words as the *constitutio Deo auctore*, which together with two other introductory constitutions *c. Omnem* and *c. Tanta* is printed in editions of the Digest. For particulars, see Jolowicz, p. 490 ff. These constitutions will repay study—English versions in Monro's translation of the Digest (Cambridge University Press).

<sup>67</sup> There is a reference to this work in *Inst.* 1. 5. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Cicero's freedman Tiro wrote a book of miscellanea thus entitled. *Aul. Gell.* 13. 9.

middle of the third century. Contrary to their apparent instructions the compilers included a few jurists who had not had the *jus respondendi*.<sup>68a</sup> Much attention has been given to the method of arrangement of the texts of the Digest. A young German of the name of Bluhme early in the last century advanced a theory which has been generally accepted.<sup>69</sup> According to this, the works of the jurists were distributed among three committees. One dealt with the commentaries of Ulpian and others on Sabinus and other works on the civil law, another with commentaries, principally Ulpian's commentary, on the Edict, a third with the *Quaestiones* and *Responsa* of Papinian and other miscellaneous matter. There resulted three "masses" which are distinguished as the Sabinian mass, the Edictal mass, and the Papinian mass. The committees compared their results and in each Title the longest mass was (usually) placed first, then the other two according to their size. To these was sometimes added a Supplement or Appendix.

34. In the year 529 a new edition of the Code was issued called the code of the second edition—*codex repetitae praelectionis*—which superseded the *codex vetus* of 529. It is made up of a great number of rescripts of earlier date than Constantine (one only as old as Hadrian), and of later constitutions, mostly abbreviated (thus we have only a sketchy version of Leo's important legislation on the stipulation (§ 434)), the whole interpolated (§ 36), though perhaps not so heavily as the Digest. This completed the consolidating legislation of Justinian. He supplemented his reform of the law by reorganising legal education in the Law Schools of Berytus, Rome and Constantinople. Subsequent laws known as new constitutions—*novellae constitutiones* or Novels—continued to be issued, principally in Greek, during the remainder of Justinian's reign, which lasted until 565, but few after Tribonian's death in 546. These have come down to us in three versions:—1. The *Epitome Juliani* in Latin consisting of 122 novels; 2. The *Authenticum*, a fuller Latin version, so-called because in the age of the glossators it enjoyed authority in the Courts and was thought by some to be an official collection made by Justinian's order for promulgation in Italy; 3. A Greek version of 168 novels, some later than Justinian.

The glossators used to note in their texts of the code changes made by subsequent legislation. Any such note is cited as

<sup>68a</sup> In particular, three Republican jurists and Gaius (§ 39), but perhaps the compilers understood their instructions to include any authors admitted by the Law of Citations (§ 23). Buckl. T. p. 40; Jolowicz, p. 488.

<sup>69</sup> Jolowicz, p. 493; Buckland, M. p. 23.



authentica (constitutio) ad codicem, or, merely, authentica, and later writers frequently refer to these summaries instead of to the full text. An instance familiar in South Africa is Nov. 134 c. 8, which forbade married women to bind themselves as sureties for their husbands (§ 567). A summary of this was inserted after Cod. 4. 29. 22, and is commonly cited as authentica siqua mulier; that is, the summary which begins with the words siqua mulier ("if any woman").<sup>70</sup>

35. The Digest is divided into fifty books, each of them (except Books XXX, XXXI, and XXXII, which relate all three to the single topic of Legacies and Fideicommissa) subdivided into chapters or Titles, each having at its head a rubric shortly describing its contents. Each Title consists of extracts from the works of the jurists. In every case the source of the citation is given, e.g., "Ulpian in Book X on the Edict", "Florentinus in Book VI of the Institutes". These extracts are described as "fragments" or, since the whole of the Digest had statutory authority, as leges (laws). In modern editions the "fragments" for convenience of reference are subdivided, if of considerable length, into numbered sections or paragraphs; but the initial section or paragraph is not numbered, and is cited as pr.=principium. Thus (to take an example) Dig. 41. 1. 10 pr. means the first (unnumbered) section or paragraph of the tenth fragment or lex of the first Title (de adquirendo rerum dominio) of Book XLI of the Digest. The paragraph next following is cited as Dig. 41. 1. 10, 1, and so on. The Institutes consist of four Books, subdivided into Titles, but, since the subject-matter is presented in narrative form and not as a collection of extracts, there is no further subdivision except into sections or paragraphs. Thus, "Inst. 2. 1 pr." means the opening (unnumbered) section or paragraph of the first Title (de rerum divisione) of Book II of the Institutes. The next section or paragraph is Inst. 2. 1. 1, and so on. The Code consists of twelve Books divided like the Digest and Institutes into Titles, which are subdivided as in the Digest into laws (leges) and sections or paragraphs. The Novels are usually divided into chapters and sections.

36. Before leaving the subject of Justinian's legislation a few words may be devoted to its general character. In the first sentence of his *Ancient Law* Maine declares that "the most celebrated system of jurisprudence known to the world begins, as it ends, with a code". When he says that it ends with a code he means that Justinian's legislation as a whole may be described as a work of codification. Plainly, it bears

<sup>70</sup> Lee, p. 315.

no resemblance to a code in the modern sense. The Institutes is an elementary textbook for students, for the most part compiled from earlier sources. The Novels are statutes, called for by the exigencies of the occasion or the reforming zeal of the Emperor. The Code and the Digest are compiled from earlier codes and statutes and from a vast juristic literature. They do not pretend to reproduce the original texts, but have brought them up to date so as to accommodate them, more or less successfully, to the existing state of the law. This has been effected by additions, omissions and alterations which are comprehensively described as interpolations. The older writers called them *emblemata Triboniani*—Tribonian's "interjections". Much effort has been directed, particularly in recent years, to the detection of these changes with a view to reconstructing the original text of the laws and authors cited and the ascertainment of the law of the classical period. The problem is complicated by the fact, now generally admitted, that the work of interpolation did not begin with Justinian. This would naturally be so in the case of the Code, the earlier constitutions of which had already passed through two or three editions. But there is reason to suppose that the texts of the Digest too suffered changes in the course of transmission, accidental certainly, perhaps also designed. Some of the works cited are thought to carry a false attribution. Thus, it is said that the so-called *Opiniones* of Ulpian, and, perhaps, the *Res Cottidianae* or *Aurea*, ascribed to Gaius (§ 39), were not the work of these authors, but belong to the post-classical period. Intimately connected with the question of interpolation are two others; first, as to the course of development of the Roman Law from the end of the classical period until the age of Justinian; secondly, as to the general character of Justinian's codification and of the Digest in particular. The interval of some three centuries which separates Modestinus from Justinian is, so far, at least, as our knowledge goes, a dark age in the history of Roman Law, not indeed for want of material, for the Theodosian code and other documents fall within the period, but because the material does not afford an answer to our questions. In the west it was a time of decline and decay. In the east there was considerable activity in the Law Schools, particularly of Constantinople and Berytus. The law—how could it be otherwise?—was very different in the time of Justinian from what it was in the time of the great jurists. What was the nature of the change? On one view the Roman Law underwent a natural process of development principally in the west, incorporating new elements, but con-

tinuing to be "a legitimate descendant of the classical law".<sup>71</sup> On another view, Justinian's *Corpus Juris*<sup>72</sup> not only registered the absorption in the system of rules and institutions of Hellenic and Eastern origin, but was conditioned by a moral and intellectual atmosphere, prevailing in the Law Schools and outside them, wholly alien from the spirit of the classical law. This is what is meant when we are told that Justinian's legislation was "Byzantine" in character. But as regards the Digest, in particular, though the commissioners made innumerable alterations in matters of detail, it cannot be believed that they gave an entirely new complexion to the ancient texts. Such a thing would under any circumstances scarcely have been possible. It was certainly impossible in the few years in which the commissioners completed their task; nor is it proved that any such revolutionary revision of the texts had been made at an earlier date. We are justified, therefore, in concluding in favour of the fundamentally Roman character of the law which has been preserved in the Digest. It is true that in many respects it is far removed from the classical law, but neither is it completely harmonised with the law of Justinian's own time. Justinian offered it to the world as a coherent whole, free of inconsistencies and too clear to require commentary. The mediaeval and modern lawyers who had to make the system work in practice displayed an inexhaustible ingenuity in reconciling conflicting texts. For the scholar of today these discrepancies—"antinomies" as they are called—are provocative and alluring. They help him to see the Roman Law not as a static system, but as a dynamic force, changing through the centuries, adapting itself to changing social and moral ideas and a changed environment. It is easy to point out the imperfections in the Digest, but without it we should know little indeed of Roman Law, and we must be grateful to Justinian for having given us a work "which has influenced European life more than it has been affected by any other work except the Bible".<sup>73</sup>

[It lies outside our scope to enter upon the subject of interpolations. Reference may be made to Buckl. *T.*, p. 42; Jolowicz, p. 492. The following may serve as examples. In Dig. 13. 7. 8. 3., as the text stands, a feminine pronoun *eam* refers back to a neuter noun *pignus* (*eam* in place of *id*). It is plain that *pignus* has been substituted for *fiducia* (§ 245). Similarly, *traditio* is substituted

<sup>71</sup> Buckl. *Harvard Law Journal* (1941) vol. liv, p. 1273.

<sup>72</sup> This term describes the whole of Justinian's legislation, Institutes, Digest, Code, Novels. The texts are, or should be, accessible to everybody in what is called the Berlin stereotype edition.

<sup>73</sup> Buckl. *ubi sup.*

for *mancipatio*, *fidejussio* for *fidepromissio*, etc. In a text attributed to Ulpian (Dig. 30. 1. 1.) it is said that legacies have been in all respects assimilated to *fideicommissa*. This was not so until Justinian. In Dig. 18. 6. 19 (18), 1. by substituting *nisi* for *tametsi*, which, as appears from the *Vatican Fragments* (§ 38) was the original text, the compilers attribute to Papinian the opposite of what he really said. In all this there is no question of "passing off". Justinian (fortunately for Roman Law studies) indicates the sources from which his material is drawn; as he says himself (*c. Tanta* 10), he did this out of respect for ancient authority, "so that the names of men learned in the law should not be consigned to oblivion".]

37. In the Eastern Empire, where the Digest seemed most secure, it was, in defiance of Justinian's order, even during his lifetime, made the subject of commentaries and later of abridgments.<sup>74</sup> These were written in the Greek language, which was more generally understood. Overlaid by such literature, as well as by statute and new customary law, Justinian's legislation was already in process of dissolution when it was recalled to life at the beginning of the tenth century by the *Basilica*, a restatement of the Roman Law, in which the whole of the *Corpus Juris* was fused into a single compilation in sixty books. This was projected by the Emperor Basil I, known as the Macedonian (867—886), and promulgated by his son Leo the Philosopher (886—911).<sup>75</sup> It has been described as "an authoritative and official rendering for the first time of the Latin treatises of Justinian into Greek".<sup>76</sup> In Italy, the Digest had an authority which lasted only so long as Justinian's short-lived triumph over the barbarians. It passed out of sight until it re-emerged to be converted by glossators and post-glossators into a common law for western Europe, which as a *modernus usus Pandectarum* retained its authority in many parts of Germany until the end of the last century, and still does so in the Union of South Africa.

38. OTHER ROMAN LAW SOURCES.—The *Corpus Juris* of Justinian is the principal source of our knowledge of Roman Law. But there is a considerable mass of material of earlier date. The *Codex Theodosianus* has been already mentioned (§ 32). Of the *Institutes* of Gaius we shall speak below. Here mention may be made of a few other sources. The *Vatican Fragments* is particularly valuable as containing citations from Papinian, Paul and Ulpian unaffected by the interpolations of Justinian's compilers. The work dates from

<sup>74</sup> Jol6wicz, p. 487.

<sup>75</sup> Jolowicz, p. 514.

<sup>76</sup> Sheldon Amos, *The History and Principles of the Civil Law of Rome*, p. 400.

before the Theodosian Code. The *Collatio legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum*, commonly called the *Collatio*, is a comparison of the law of Moses and the Roman Law mainly in the matter of criminal law, made, apparently, with the design of showing the superiority of the former. It dates from the fourth century and contains extracts from the old writers, but is of less value than the *Vatican Fragments*, for it is not the work of a lawyer. The short work described as *Tituli ex corpore Ulpiani* and identified with a book attributed to Ulpian under the name *Liber singularis regularum* is an abridgment of a work by Ulpian or some other classical author. The so-called *Sententiae* of Paul, for the most part preserved in the Breviary of Alaric, is an abridgment of a work by Paul or of an "anthology" of extracts from Paul and other writers of the classical period together with post-classical elements.<sup>77</sup>

39. **GAIUS NOSTER.**—Gaius deserves a section to himself, though, indeed, we know little about him. He emerges from obscurity in the later Empire. He does not seem to have had the *jus respondendi*,<sup>78</sup> but the Law of Citations promoted him to the first rank. Justinian calls him "our Gaius" (*Gaius noster*). Of the man personally next to nothing is known. He flourished (so much appears from his Institutes) in the reigns of Antoninus Pius (138—161) and Marcus Aurelius (161—180). He was still alive in 178, for he wrote a monograph on the S. C. Orfitianum of that year. There are some indications in his book that he was a provincial, not resident in Rome, but opinion on this point is divided. Besides the Institutes (more correctly *Institutiones*) he is credited with the authorship of the *Res Cottidianae* or *Aurea* (§ 32). His other works include commentaries on the Twelve Tables (§ 9), on Quintus Mucius Scaevola (§ 11), and on the urban and provincial Edicts (§ 14).

G. 1. 188.

40. The Institutes of Gaius is the only work of the classical age of Roman Law which has survived substantially in the form which the author gave it. It was known only from extracts in the Digest and from the epitome included in the Breviary of Alaric (§ 26) until in 1816 the historian Niebuhr discovered an original text, erased (as the practice was) to make the parchment available for other matter, but not incapable of being to a great extent deciphered. This is what is known as the Verona palimpsest from the place of its

<sup>77</sup> Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia del Diritto Romano*, p. 324; Jolowicz, p. 476.

<sup>78</sup> Most of the jurists cited in the Digest must have had it. But, by chance, our sources mention only Masurius Sabinus (§ 22) and, perhaps, an otherwise unknown Innocentius in the reign of Diocletian.

discovery, where it still is, the chapter library at Verona. Recently, fragments forthcoming in Egypt have confirmed and supplemented the text. Some fragments of a paraphrase of Gaius discovered at Autun in 1898 (the Autun Gaius) have little value, but make an interesting contribution on one matter in the law of delict (§ 624).

41. Niebuhr's discovery made an epoch in the study of Roman Law. The manuscript supplied in a compendious form a picture of the law as it was in the second century, and since Justinian took the Institutes of Gaius for the model of his own Institutes, it has been possible to print the two books in parallel columns, as in Gneist's *Syntagma*, thus affording the student the opportunity of noting the changes in the law which had taken place in the course of four centuries, or were effected by Justinian himself. Above all, the fourth book of Gaius (omitted from the epitome) threw a flood of light on the subject of civil procedure. It is our primary source of knowledge of the nature of the formula (§ 672) and its various practical applications.

## II.—THE INSTITUTES—PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS

42. JUSTICE—JURISPRUDENCE.—The Institutes begins with definitions borrowed from Ulpian.<sup>79</sup> "Justice is a set and constant purpose, giving to everyone his due . . ." "Jurisprudence is the knowledge of things divine and human; the science of the just and the unjust". The first was a commonplace of the schools of philosophy. The second, if it is to be regarded as anything more than a rhetorical flourish, may be a tradition from a time when the sanctions of law and religion were not sharply distinguished. The definition of justice given in the text is a definition of a moral virtue, an attribute of human character. To the lawyer of to-day the words—"just"—"justice"—suggest rather the quality of an act estimated with reference to some standard of conduct. This may be (a) a moral standard, or (b) a legal standard. 1. 1 pr.  
1. 1. 1.

43. (a) When we apply a moral standard we find it outside the limits of any given system, *e.g.*, if one ventured to say that an Act of Parliament or a decision of the House of Lords was "unjust". Our standard here is external to the law. It is one by which a rule of law may be criticised and perhaps condemned. To fix this standard is the business not of law, but of ethics, or moral philosophy.

(b) When we apply a legal standard we mean by "justice",

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<sup>79</sup> Dig. 1. 1. 10.

right or wrong as determined by the law of our country. In this sense we speak of the "administration of justice".

44. Jurisprudence is the science of justice in the legal sense of the word. Ulpian's definition is too comprehensive, for it seems to merge into a single formula, law, morality and religion. This may be attributed partly to the historical connection of Roman Law with Roman religion, partly to the ambiguity of the word *jus*, which includes both morality and law. However, it serves to correct the too narrow definition of jurisprudence adopted by some English writers. Thus Holland defines jurisprudence as "the formal science of positive law". This will do well enough so far as relates to what is called specifically "analytical jurisprudence", which consists in the analysis and classification of legal institutions and terms, but is inadequate as an account of legal science in general, because it fails to take account either of historical jurisprudence, that is the study of the way in which law has grown up, or of critical (or, as Bentham calls it, censorial) jurisprudence, that is the theory of what law ought to be. We must be content to define jurisprudence as "the science of law", distinguishing its three departments, analytical, historical and critical. Any one of these may employ the comparative method of study. This is the meaning of the elusive term "comparative law".

1. 1. 4.

45. Justinian goes on to say that the study of law comprises two branches, Public Law and Private Law. This is the division which the Roman lawyers take as the primary line of cleavage in the legal system. "Public Law has regard to the constitution of the Roman State. Private Law is concerned with the interest of individuals". The classification is intelligible and convenient, though there are points at which the two overlap. The first includes constitutional law, administrative law, criminal law and procedure and the *jus sacrum*. The second comprises those branches of law which regulate the relations of citizens to one another, family law, property, obligations and succession. The Institutes is mainly concerned with private law. It ends with one Title on criminal law, which belongs to the *jus publicum*.

1. 1. 4.

46. *JUS NATURALE—JUS GENTIUM—JUS CIVILE.*—The *jus privatum*, we are told, is three-fold. "It is derived from natural precepts, or from the precepts of universal law,<sup>80</sup> or from the precepts of the civil law." This is taken from the

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<sup>80</sup> I take occasion to say that this is my translation of *jus gentium*. Law of nations" is misleading, "Law of peoples" obscure. But for the most part I shall leave the words untranslated.

Institutes of Ulpian,<sup>81</sup> and, combining passages taken from Ulpian and Gaius, Justinian goes on to develop the subject in the following passage: "The law of nature is the law which nature has taught all animals. . . . This is the source of the union of male and female, which we call matrimony, as well as of the procreation and rearing of children. . . . The civil law is distinguished from universal law as follows. Every people which is governed by laws and customs uses partly a law peculiar to itself, partly a law common to all mankind. For the law which each people makes for itself is peculiar to itself and is called the civil law, as being the law peculiar to the community in question. But the law which natural reason has prescribed for all mankind is held in equal observance amongst all peoples, and is called universal law, as being the law which all peoples use. Thus the Roman People uses a law partly peculiar to itself, partly common to all mankind".

1. 2 pr.

1. 2. 1.

47. Such is the threefold division of the Roman private law, which has been the source of endless commentary. The difficulty is that each of the three terms—*jus naturale*—*jus civile*—*jus gentium*—is used in various senses and the meanings which have most value for the legal historian are not the meanings which are given to them in the above passage. It is necessary, therefore, to examine each of them in turn and it will be convenient to begin with the *jus civile*.

48. Nations (We use the word to include any independent community of men), particularly in the early stages of their history, are generally satisfied with their own institutions, and do not concern themselves much with the institutions of their neighbours. Each has its own system of law which is its peculiar and cherished possession. It is the law of the *civitas* or State and may be described as the *jus civile* of the State in question. The Romans had their system of customary law, partly embodied in the Law of the Twelve Tables. This was their *jus civile*, and this, therefore, is the original meaning of the term. It is the whole body of the law of Rome, and particularly this body of law as expounded and interpreted by the jurists.<sup>82</sup> Sometimes the term is used in a narrower sense to point a contrast. Thus, within the body of the Roman Law the *jus civile* may be distinguished from the *jus gentium* (as in this passage) or from the praetor's equity, the *jus honorarium*. In much the same way English lawyers use the term "common law" now in a wider, now in a narrower sense.

49. The term *jus gentium* has two meanings, which we may

<sup>81</sup> Dig. 1. 1. 1, 2.

<sup>82</sup> Dig. 1. 2. 2, 5.



\*distinguish as the practical and the theoretical. In primitive communities the law may seem stationary, but insensibly it changes by development from within. When it is exposed to external influences the pace is accelerated. This was the experience of Rome. The emancipation of the law from priestly influence opened the way to a wider outlook. Simultaneously, the need was felt of a law which could be applied to unprivileged alien residents, who from the third century B.C. formed an increasingly numerous section of the population. They were outside the pale of the civil law, but it was impossible to treat them as outside the pale of all law whatever. The Romans found a solution in developing a subsidiary or secondary civil law, which they applied both to aliens and to their own people. It came to be known as *jus gentium* or the law of peoples, that is, of peoples in general; for *jus gentium* is Latin for "the law of the world" just as "*ubi gentium?*" is Latin for "where in the world?". The consequence was that the whole body of the Roman Law, that is of the *jus civile* in the wider sense, came to consist of two parts, a nucleus which was the peculiar birthright of Roman citizens, including the formal and ceremonial part of the law such as *dominium ex jure Quiritium* (§ 140), *mancipatio* (§ 146), in *jure cessio* (§ 153), *sponsio* (§ 431), and a circumference which was free from these technicalities, and was available to citizen and foreigner alike.<sup>83</sup> It provided for the ordinary exigencies of commercial life, buying and selling, letting and hiring and the transfer of property in movables by transfer of possession. Besides this, the peculiarly Roman institution of the verbal contract was made available to a wider circle, though the use of the solemn form "*spondesne*" ? "*spondeo*" (§ 432) continued to be restricted to citizens.

49a. The process by which the *jus gentium* was evolved remains obscure. There can be little doubt that it was the work of the Courts and of lay jurists, using material partly inherent in the original system, partly introduced from outside. We may be sure that there was no conscious search for uniformities in the laws of Rome and her neighbours, nor is there evidence for the existence of a mercantile law common to the trading nations of antiquity, nor for the view, commonly asserted, that the *jus gentium* found its way into Roman Law by way of the edict of the peregrine praetor, though in part it

<sup>83</sup> *Majores nostri aliud jus gentium aliud jus civile esse voluerunt. Quod civile non idem continuo gentium, quod autem gentium idem civile esse debet. Cic. de Off. 3. 17. 69.*

may have done so.<sup>84</sup> Under the Empire with the extension of Roman citizenship on the one hand and the decay of specifically Roman institutions on the other the distinction between *jus civile* and *jus gentium* ceased to have much practical value.

50. It was a commonplace of Greek philosophy, particularly of Stoic philosophy, to distinguish in a legal system the part which was peculiar to it, and the part which it had in common with other systems. The first seemed to be arbitrary and accidental, the second was thought of as rational and universal and, therefore, of a higher validity. It was natural justice. When in the last century and a half of the Republic Rome came under the influence of Greek ideas, her own empirical rules were brought within the framework of Greek speculation with the result that the *jus gentium* and the *jus naturale* were for most purposes identified. Thus on the one hand concrete principles of Roman Law, as in the matter of the acquisition of ownership, are attributed indifferently to *jus gentium* and to *jus naturale*, and on the other hand abstract principles which commend themselves by their reasonableness are said to be prescribed by the *jus gentium*.<sup>85</sup> In theory the identification is complete. But the theory retains many inconsistencies. The *jus gentium*, we are told, is common to all mankind, because "peoples have established certain laws for themselves as occasion and the necessities of human life required". But the law of nature was "established by nature at the origin of mankind",<sup>86</sup> and "the laws of nature which are observed amongst all peoples alike, being established by a divine providence, remain ever fixed and immutable". Plainly facts and theory cannot be brought into perfect harmony, and there is the question of slavery to which we refer below.

51. The subject of *jus naturale* has necessarily been anticipated in the foregoing section. Ulpian describes it as "the law which nature has taught all animals".<sup>87</sup> But this is to speak of law in a sense quite different from that in which we commonly speak of human beings as being subject to law. The description belongs to the order of ideas which represent law as the plan of the universe, and lies outside the

<sup>84</sup> We must not think of the two praetors as if each lived in a world of his own; occasionally one man held both offices at the same time. Liv. 25. 3; 37. 50.

<sup>85</sup> E.g., prohibition of marriage between ascendants and descendants, Dig. 23. 2. 68—*condictio ex injusta causa*, Dig. 25. 2. 25.

<sup>86</sup> Cum ipso genere humano proditum, Dig. 41. 1. 1; quod cum ipso genere humano rerum natura prodidit, Inst. 2. 1. 11.

<sup>87</sup> Dig. 1. 1. 1, 3; Inst. 1. 2 pr.

1 2. 1.

field of jurisprudence.<sup>88</sup> We may ignore it, as it was in fact generally ignored by the Roman jurists.<sup>89</sup> The common usage was to limit the term natural law or law of nature to rules of human conduct, supposed to be rational and universal, and scarcely distinguishable from the *jus gentium*, which also is represented as established by natural reason. But there is one point at which the two conceptions draw apart, namely, in connection with slavery, which, though universally recognised and therefore permitted by the *jus gentium*, was considered by later speculation (not by Aristotle) to be repugnant to natural reason and therefore to the *jus naturale*. So that we arrive, finally, at a conception of the *jus naturale* which distinguishes it from the *jus gentium*, namely, "an ideal to which it is desirable that law should conform"<sup>90</sup>; not that we must think of this as an ideal code, but as an abstract principle by which institutions are to be assessed. Thus we revert to a triple division of law, though not in the sense intended by Ulpian. Mediaeval writers usually distinguish *jus gentium* and *jus naturale*, and in later political literature the doctrine of a social contract opens out a further field of speculation. Starting from the assumption that civil societies somehow or other originated in contract, the writers of the sixteenth and following centuries suppose an original state of nature antecedent to the contract, governed actually or potentially by laws of nature. Since this state of nature is merely imaginary, it was open to each writer to frame the laws of nature according to the dictates of his own fancy. Generally, they are found to coincide more or less with the fundamental principles of morality, and this is the sense in which the term "laws of nature" is still sometimes employed. As interpreted by Grotius the Law of Nature was one of the principal elements in the formation of the modern system of International Law.

52. To revert to the Roman Law, the conclusion to be drawn is that the distinction between *jus civile* and *jus gentium* is a question of history, but this, unfortunately, is precisely the point on which the texts of the Roman Law leave us uninformed. The distinction between *jus gentium*, used now in a vaguer abstract sense, and the *jus naturale*, so far as they are distinguished, is a matter of theoretical speculation. Gaius and Justinian reflect in a blurred and confused picture

<sup>88</sup> Holland (*Jurisprudence*, p. 19 ff.) distinguishes and illustrates the two principal meanings of Law, *viz.*, 1. Law as the order of the Universe; 2. Law as a rule of action. The distinction is often blurred by Religion, Poetry and Metaphor. Some readers may recall Hooker's magnificently rhetorical description of Law in the *Ecclesiastical Polity*.

<sup>89</sup> Goudy, *Trichotomy in Roman Law*, p. 26.

<sup>90</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 29.

the doctrine of Greek philosophy. They would have done us a better service if they had given us some account of the way in which the Roman *jus gentium* grew up and was or became part of the law of Rome.

53. *JUS SCRIPTUM—JUS NON SCRIPTUM.*—Justinian goes on to distinguish written law and unwritten law. The Romans use the term *jus scriptum* in a sense which is wide enough to include any authoritative statement or exposition of the law which is expressed in writing. English usage limits the term “written law” to statute law, that is “an express precept which not only declares or contains, but in its very words constitutes the law”.<sup>90a</sup> Unwritten law is law which is created by custom or usage, which as Justinian quaintly observes imitates a statute. This recalls the equally strange idea once current that the English common law was statute law ground small.

54. *THE SOURCES OF THE JUS SCRIPTUM.*—Justinian 1. 2. 3. enumerates *lex—plebiscitum—senatusconsultum—magistratum edicta—responsa prudentium—principum placita*. We have traced above the historical development of these several institutions. Long before Justinian the first five had ceased to be living sources of law. All fresh law proceeded from the Emperor. It must be noticed that according to the Institutes 1. 2. 11. (and in the Digest Julian is quoted to the same effect)<sup>91</sup> written laws may be abrogated not only by express enactment but also by desuetude and tacit consent. On the other hand a constitution of Constantine is inserted in the Code to the effect that custom is not to override reason or statute,<sup>92</sup> but this may mean that local customs are not to be allowed to abrogate a general statute. It has been questioned whether Justinian really contemplated as possible the abrogation of imperial legislation by mere disuse.<sup>93</sup>

55. *THE LAW OF PERSONS.*—“The whole of our law”, says Justinian, repeating the language of Gaius, “relates either to persons or to things or to actions”. What is the meaning of this arrangement? The two latter terms are clearer than the first. “The law of actions” means legal remedies and procedure. “The law of things” means the law of property, understood in a sense wide enough to include obligations and succession. But doubt has prevailed as to the meaning and scope of the law relating to persons. This is due partly to the desultory way in which the subject is treated both by Gaius

<sup>90a</sup> Pollock, *A First Book of Jurisprudence*, p. 219.

<sup>91</sup> Dig. 1. 3. 32, 1 (*in fine*).

<sup>92</sup> Cod. 8. 52. 2.

<sup>93</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 26.

- and by Justinian, but still more to the common tendency of writers to interpret the text in accordance with a preconceived system. It is to Gaius rather than to Justinian that we must look for a solution, for Justinian merely follows the arrangement of the older writer, while introducing fresh matter which seems to confuse the issue. It may safely be said that the law relating to persons (or, as it is also called, "the law of persons") is not "family law" in any of the senses which may be given to that phrase, nor the law of status, if this is to be taken to include the consequences of variations of status in the departments of property and obligations. But in a more limited sense the law of persons may be identified with the law of status. Differences of status give colour to every legal relation. Before going further we should at least know what these differences are. It is the business of the law of persons to tell us what they are. "Let us speak first of persons", says Justinian, "for it is of little use to know the law if we do not know the persons for whom the law is made."
1. 3. Thus understood, the law of persons will be "concerned with a description only of the principal among those different classes of persons whose distinctive characteristics are legally important" and an explanation in each case of the ways in which the status in question is acquired and lost.<sup>94</sup> It may be difficult in the Roman system to find a place for what to-day is sometimes called "the law of the domestic relations", i.e., of the relations of father and child, husband and wife, guardian and ward, etc. But we must not allow this to mislead us as to the meaning which Gaius attached to "the law relating to persons".
1. 2. 12.

56. SUMMARY OF THE INSTITUTES.—We are now in a position to summarise the contents of the Institutes of Gaius and Justinian. The first Book will tell us what are the principal classes of persons known to Roman Law. This is the Law relating to Persons. The next section, comprising in Gaius Books II and III and in Justinian Books II and III and Titles I to V of Book IV, will deal with the substance of the Law. This is the Law relating to Things. The last section, comprising in Gaius the whole and in Justinian the remainder of Book IV, is concerned principally with procedure. This is the Law relating to Actions. But this distinction of topics is by no means rigidly maintained,

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<sup>94</sup> Buckl. *Elementary Principles*, p. 8; *Textbook*, p. 59.

## THE INSTITUTES OF JUSTINIAN

*Proem**In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*

THE EMPEROR CAESAR FLAVIUS JUSTINIANUS; CONQUEROR OF THE ALAMANNI, GOTHs, FRANKS, GERMANS, ANTAE, ALANI, VANDALS, AFRICANS; PIOUS; PROSPEROUS; RENOWNED, VICTORIOUS; TRIUMPHANT; EVER AUGUST, TO YOUNG MEN DESIROUS OF THE LAW —

The Imperial Majesty should be not only made glorious by arms, but also armed with laws, that war and peace alike may be well directed, and that the Roman Emperor may not only be triumphant in battle, but also by pursuing the paths of law may overcome the wicked designs of unprincipled men and be seen to be as much a scrupulous upholder of justice as victorious over conquered foes

1 Both ends with untiring effort and unfailing foresight by God's blessing we have attained. The valour of our arms barbarian nations made subject to our sway have learnt to know. Africa and innumerable other provinces, after so long an interval by the victories which God has given us restored to our rule and Empire, bear witness to it. All nations now are ruled by laws which we have issued or compiled.

2 For when we had reduced to splendid harmony the unordered § 32 mass of imperial constitutions, we next extended our care to the immense material of the ancient jurisprudence, and adventuring, so to say, into mid ocean, by Heaven's favour completed a task, which might well have been deemed hopeless.

3 This too by God's blessing accomplished, to the most eminent Tribonian, master and ex quaestor of our Sacred Palace together with the illustrious Theophilus and Dorotheus, professors of law, who have given many proofs of their ability, legal knowledge, and faithful discharge of our orders, we have issued special directions by our authority and at our instance to compile a book of Institutes, that so you may get your first notions of law not from ancient fables, but from the bright light of the imperial throne, and may hear and apprehend nothing useless, nothing out of place, but only what rests upon a solid basis of fact, thus, a thing to which former students attained only after four years' application—the reading of the imperial constitutions—you may now enter upon from the very beginning, being found worthy of the honour and the happiness of receiving your law from first to last from the mouth of the Emperor.

4 Accordingly, after the completion of the fifty books of the Digest or Pandects, in which with the help of the eminent Tribonian and other illustrious and learned men the whole of the old jurisprudence has been compiled, we have ordered the composition in four Books of these Institutes, destined to contain the elements of the whole science of law. 5 In these, a short account is given of the law of former days as well as of law which having been obscured by disuse has been brought into the light by our reforming hand. 6 These four Books, compiled from all the institutional works of ancient authors and in

§§ 32, 39. particular from the Institutions of our Gaius<sup>95</sup> and from his book on "Daily Affairs" and many other commentaries, the three eminent men aforesaid have submitted for our approval. We have read and examined them, and have given them the force and effect of one of our constitutions.

7. Receive therefore earnestly and with eager attention these our laws and show yourselves so far advanced in your studies that you may be encouraged by the noble ambition of being able, when your training is complete, to undertake such functions of government as may be assigned to you in the different departments of our Empire.

Given at Constantinople on the eleventh day before the Kalends of December in the third consulate of the Emperor Justinian, Ever August (November 21, A.D. 533).

## BOOK I

### TITLE I

#### *Of Justice and Law*

Justice is a set and constant purpose giving to every man his due.

§ 42

1. Jurisprudence is the knowledge of things divine and human, the science of the just and the unjust.

2. So much being premised, since we are to explain what are the laws of the Roman People, it seems that the most convenient method will be to treat each subject in an easy simple way before proceeding to a careful and elaborate exposition. Otherwise, if from the very beginning we overload the mind of the student, still untrained and unequal to the burden, with a mass of various detail, one of two things will happen, either we shall deter him from the study of law, or, at the cost of much toil and self-distrust, which so often discourages young men, we shall at last bring him to a point of attainment, which, led by an easier road, he might have reached more quickly, without great toil and want of confidence in his own powers.

§ 45.

3. The precepts of the law are these—to live honestly, not to harm another, to give every man his due. 4. The study of law has two branches, public and private. Public Law has regard to the constitution of the Roman State: Private Law is concerned with the interest of individuals. We are to speak of Private Law, which is of three kinds, being derived from natural precepts or from the precepts of universal law or from the precepts of the civil law.

§ 46.

### TITLE II

#### *Of the Law of Nature, Universal Law and the Civil Law*

§ 51.

The law of nature is the law which nature has taught all animals. This law is not peculiar to the human race, but belongs to all living creatures, birds, beasts and fishes. This is the source of the union of

<sup>95</sup> It has been inferred from *c. Omnem* (§ 1) that before Justinian Gaius was familiar only in the form of the West Gothic Epitome. But this, says Schultz, *History of Roman Legal Science* (Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 304, is "quite improbable".

male and female, which we called matrimony, as well as of the procreation and rearing of children; which things are characteristic of the whole animal creation.

1. The civil law is distinguished from universal law as follows. Every people which is governed by laws and customs uses partly a law peculiar to itself, partly a law common to all mankind. For the law which each people makes for itself is peculiar to itself, and is called the civil law, as being the law peculiar to the community in question. But the law which natural reason has prescribed for all mankind is held in equal observance amongst all peoples and is called universal law, as being the law which all peoples use. Thus the Roman People uses a law partly peculiar to itself, partly common to all mankind. What those laws are, we shall explain severally in proper sequence. § 49.

2. The civil law takes its name from the country to which it belongs. Thus the laws of Solon or of Draco may properly be described as the civil law of the Athenians. In the same way we describe the law which the Roman People uses as the civil law of the Romans, or as the law of the Quirites (*jus Quiritium*), because the Romans are called Quirites after Quirinus.<sup>96</sup> But when we use the term *jus civile* without specifying any State in particular we mean our own law, just as "the Poet" without mention of any name in particular means for the Greeks Homer, for us Virgil. But universal law is common to the whole human race. For under the pressure of use and necessity the peoples of mankind have created for themselves certain rules. Thus, wars arose and captivity and slavery, which is contrary to natural law, for by natural law from the beginning all men were born free. From this universal law almost all contracts are derived, such as sale, hire, partnership, deposit, loan and countless others.

3. All our law is written or unwritten, according to the distinction made by the Greeks. The written law consists of statute (*lex*), plebiscita, *senatusconsulta*, enactments of the Emperors, the edicts of magistrates, the answers of men learned in the law. § 53.  
4. A *lex* is that which the Roman People used to enact on the proposition of a senatorial magistrate,<sup>97</sup> such as a consul. A *plebiscitum* is that which the plebs used to enact on the proposition of a plebeian magistrate, namely,<sup>98</sup> a tribune. The plebs differs from the People as species from genus. For the word People signifies the whole citizen body, patricians and senators included.<sup>99</sup> The word plebs § 7, 20.

<sup>96</sup> Quirinus was the name given to the deified Romulus.

<sup>97</sup> The phrase is inexact. The tribunes, too, in the later Republic, were senators (§ 19). The proper term is "*curule magistrate*", i.e., a magistrate of the Roman People.

<sup>98</sup> The text has *veluti*—"such as". But in fact the tribunes alone (not the plebeian aediles) had the right of initiating legislation in the *concilium plebis*.

<sup>99</sup> Justinian has departed from the text of Gaius by adding the words "and senators". This is a mere blunder. In the later Empire patrician and senator were titles of nobility. This had nothing to do with the ancient division of the community into patricians and plebeians, which scarcely survived the Republic.



- means the citizens exclusive of patricians and senators. After the enactment of the *lex Hortensia plebiscita* began to have the same force as statutes. 5. A *senatusconsultum* is that which the senate orders and enacts. For when the Roman People had become so greatly enlarged that it was difficult for it to be called together for the purpose of enacting a law, it seemed right that the Senate should be consulted instead of the People. 6. Further, what the Emperor has been pleased to command has the force of law since by the *lex regia*<sup>100</sup> passed about his sovereignty the People has made over to him all its own sovereignty and power. Whatever, therefore, the Emperor has settled by letter or decided judicially or ordained by edict certainly has the force of a statute. All such expressions of the imperial will are called constitutions. Clearly some of these are personal and do not create a precedent to be followed, such not being the Emperor's intention. For example, a special instance of reward or punishment or of relief not intended to create a precedent does not go beyond the person concerned. Other constitutions, being general in character, are undoubtedly binding on everyone. 7. The edicts of the praetors too have considerable legal authority. We commonly call them the *jus honorarium*, because holders of offices (*honores*), that is to say magistrates, have given authority to this branch of law. The *curule aediles* also used to publish an edict dealing with certain matters, and this forms part of the *jus honorarium*. 8. The answers of men learned in the law (*responsa prudentium*) are the decisions and opinions of those who were authorised to state the law. For in ancient times there were men charged with the function of public interpretation of the laws, on whom the Emperor had conferred the right of giving responses (*jus respondendi*). They were called *jurisconsults*. The decisions and opinions of them all had so much authority, that the judge was not allowed to depart from their responses,<sup>1</sup> as was ordained by imperial constitutions. 9. Unwritten law consists of rules approved by usage; for long-continued custom approved by the consent of those who use it imitates a statute. 10. So the civil law seems to be neatly distinguished as of two kinds. The distinction may be said to be derived from the institutions of two States, Athens and Lacedaemon. The Lacedaemonians maintained an oral tradition of the rules which they observed as laws, while the Athenians were the custodians of what they found written in their statute law.
11. The laws of nature which are observed amongst all peoples

<sup>100</sup> This passage is taken from Ulpian's *Institutes* (Dig. 1. 4. 1, where the word "*regia*" is interpolated). In the early Empire specific powers were conferred upon a new Emperor, as by the so-called *lex de imperio Vespasiani*, the text of which is only in part preserved (Girard, *Textes*, p. 106), but there is no proof of a general delegation of legislative power. Cp. *Cambridge Ancient History*, xi, 404.

<sup>1</sup> The translation reflects the vagueness of the text. The words "of them all" (*quorum omnium*) are a reminiscence of Gaius since the Law of Citations (§ 23) no longer applicable.

alike, being established by a divine providence, remain ever fixed and immutable, but the laws which each State makes for itself are frequently changed either by tacit consent of the people, or by a § 54. later statute.

12. The whole of our law relates either to persons, or to things, or § 55. to actions. Let us first consider persons; for it is of little use to know the law if we do not know the persons for whom the law was established.

## BOOK I

## THE LAW OF PERSONS

57. "Three things are ours", says Paulus, "freedom, citizenship, family".<sup>2</sup> These are what the commentators have described as the momenta, or determining factors, of status.<sup>3</sup> We meet with them particularly in connection with the subject of capitis deminutio. Gaius might conveniently have made them the foundation of his exposition of the Law of Persons. But he has not done so. Perhaps he felt that citizenship belonged rather to the sphere of public law, or it may be said that Roman Law is not much concerned with free persons who are not citizens. Citizenship is assumed to be the normal condition.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, there is no attempt to define it, or to say, except incidentally, how it is acquired and lost. The topics of freedom and family remain, but it cannot be said that these, any more than citizenship, are made the basis of a systematic treatment. The whole law of persons resolves itself into an explanation of the different "divisions" of persons, that is the different principles of classification. Persons are free or unfree. Persons are sui juris or alieni juris. Of persons sui juris some have a tutor or curator, others not. These divisions constitute for Gaius and Justinian the framework of the first Book of the Institutes. Justinian has brought Gaius up to date by omissions and additions. In many cases he introduces into the text definitions of the term used. Thus we have definitions of servitus, libertas, manumissio, nuptiae, tutela. The general tone of Justinian tends to be diffuse, while Gaius is succinct. This and, in particular, the unity of the earlier work, contrasted with the composite character of Justinian's Institutes, makes the former more agreeable reading. But it is to Justinian that we owe the transmission of the Roman Law to the modern world, and Justinian, not Gaius, will principally be our guide in the following pages.

## I. THE FIRST DIVISION OF PERSONS

*(Free Men and Slaves)*

1. 3 pr.

58. The first division of persons is into Free Men and Slaves. Slaves are born so or become so; they become so

<sup>2</sup> Dig. 4. 5. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Moyle, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 60.

either *jure gentium*, that is by being taken captive, or by civil law. We may distinguish the so-called investitive facts of slavery as: 1, unfree birth; 2, hostile capture; 3, rules of the civil law. 1. 3. 4.

59 (1). UNFREE BIRTH.—The general rule of the *jus gentium* was that children followed the status which the mother had at the time of birth, contrary to the rule of the civil law that where the parties had *conubium* (§ 82) and were lawfully married the issue followed the status of the father at the time of conception.<sup>5</sup> In principle, therefore, children born of a slave mother were slaves. But in favour of freedom they were held to be born free if the mother was free at the time of conception or at any subsequent time during pregnancy. There were some statutory exceptions from the general rule, but they were repealed by Hadrian and Vespasian.<sup>6</sup> 1. 4 pr.

60 (2). HOSTILE CAPTURE.—This continued to be a source of slavery through the whole course of Roman Law. It applied not only to declared enemies, but in principle to any foreigner, who was found within the Empire unprotected by treaty or other amicable arrangement.<sup>7</sup> 1. 3. 4.

61 (3). RULES OF THE CIVIL LAW.—In the old law a father might sell his children into slavery, but within the limits of Rome only in the modified form of *mancipium* (§ 118). By the Twelve Tables insolvent debtors might be sold *trans Tiberim* (across the Tiber), *i.e.*, into Etruria (§ 666). Enslavement was the fate of persons who evaded inscription on the census, and, perhaps, of the “manifest” thief<sup>8</sup> (§ 589). Under the Empire, slavery might come into existence in any of the following ways—(a) when a free man upwards of twenty years of age fraudulently allowed himself to be sold with a view to sharing the price; (b) by the *S. C. Claudianum* (A.D. 52) a woman who persisted in cohabiting with a slave in spite of denunciations from the slave’s master might by judicial decree be herself declared his slave<sup>9</sup>; (c) condemnation to death or to labour in the mines entailed loss of freedom (Persons so condemned were said to be slaves of punishment—*servi poenae*. They had no dominus); (d) freedmen who were guilty of serious ingratitude to their patrons might be reduced to slavery; (e) under stress of poverty parents were allowed to sell their new-born children into slavery with a right of redemption (§ 78). Of the above methods of enslavement Justinian 1. 3. 4. 1. 16. 1.

<sup>5</sup> G. 1. 78; Ulp. V. 8.

<sup>6</sup> G. 1. 83—86.

<sup>7</sup> Dig. 49. 15. 5, 2.

<sup>8</sup> G. 1. 160; 3. 189.

<sup>9</sup> G. 1. 91, 160; Inst. 3. 12. 1.

abolished (b) and (c),<sup>10</sup> retaining the others, none of them of frequent occurrence.

62. RIGHTS OF MASTERS OVER SLAVES.—Slaves were in the power of their masters (§ 75). This implied complete disability, personal and proprietary. The master had “the right of life and death” (*jus vitae necisque*), and everything acquired by the slave was acquired for the master (a rule only formally qualified if the slave was held in usufruct (§ 218)).
1. 8. 1. Under the Empire there was legislation designed to protect the slave from the most heinous kinds of cruelty. A *lex Petronia*, which dates from before A.D. 79 (a record of it having been found in Pompeii, destroyed in that year by the eruption of Vesuvius), forbade masters to expose their slaves to fight with beasts in the arena without authority from the magistrate. The Emperor Antoninus Pius (138—161) protected the slave’s life even as regards his master by enacting that a master who killed his own slave without cause was to be punished as if he had killed another man’s slave. This meant that he incurred the capital penalty of the *lex Cornelia de sicariis* (B.C. 81). The same Emperor by a rescript addressed to Aelius Marcianus in the case of certain slaves who had fled for protection to the statue of the Emperor, gave orders that if they had been too badly treated, they should be sold on the terms that they should not revert to the master’s power. This was understood to lay down a general rule. The practice of holding an inquiry in such cases, as Buckland says, “in a roundabout way gives the slave access to the Courts”.<sup>11</sup> Later, it seems, the access was more direct. It is significant that the jurist cited in the Digest<sup>12</sup> to this effect is Hermogenianus, who is thought to be the latest of the jurists made use of by the compilers.
1. 8. 2.  
4. 18. 5.  
1. 8. 2.

63. So much of the slave’s condition *de jure*. His position *de facto* is a different matter. We are speaking of an institution which existed through the whole course of Roman history and over the whole extent of the Empire. Volumes have been written on the subject. The matter may be very briefly stated as follows. In the earliest times there were few slaves and the slave was a member of the household. Plutarch in his *Life of Coriolanus* tells us that in those days (5th cent. B.C.) the Romans treated their slaves with much consideration, for they worked and lived with them on equal terms. When Rome began to extend her conquests outside Italy and to engage in distant wars there was a vast increase in the slave

<sup>10</sup> Inst. 3, 12, 1; Cod. 7, 24; Nov. 22, 8; Buckl. T. p. 70.

<sup>11</sup> *Main Institutions of Roman Private Law*, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> Dig. 5, 1, 53.

population. Julius Caesar (to give a single instance) is said to have taken captive a million Gauls. In town and country alike slave labour replaced free labour, and the great Italian estates were cultivated by immense slave-gangs, whose condition was pitiable. In the towns slavery was on the whole more tolerable. It was the practice to allow slaves to deal with their peculium as their own and to purchase their freedom.<sup>13</sup> They were sometimes highly educated men who held important positions in the business world, or made their mark in literature, art or science. In the later Empire things changed for the worse. The deterioration of economic conditions and the development of a system of hereditary castes excluded slaves from employments previously open to them. On the other hand the philosophic ideal of the *jus naturale* and the influence of Christianity encouraged manumission, and there is evidence that as time went on slavery declined in importance.<sup>14</sup> On the land it gave place to *colonatus* (§ 65), which anticipated the villenage of the Middle Ages.

64. Was the Roman slave a thing or a person? The answer is he was both. He could be owned and as such was a *res*. But he was a human being and as such a person, for the idea that personality implies "a being or group capable of legal rights and duties"<sup>15</sup> developed slowly and took shape only in the Byzantine period under the influence, it is said, of ideas derived from theology. The moral claim of the slave to be regarded as a human being was recognised in many ways apart from the legislation above referred to. Thus, to mention only two examples, the burial of a slave made the ground *locus religiosus* (§ 133) and, though slaves could not contract a legal marriage, natural kinship was recognised as defining the degrees within which marriage was not permitted after manumission. Slaves were subject to the criminal law. They were bound by *delict*, but during slavery the liability attached to the master, absolutely or to the extent of noxal surrender (§ 621). After manumission they were personally answerable. Their contracts created a natural obligation (§ 392) available after manumission not as a ground of action but as a defence by, or against them.<sup>15a</sup> All of this is contained in the following passage of Ulpian: "Slaves are bound by *delict* and remain bound after manumission. By contract they are not bound by civil law, but by natural law they are bound themselves and bind others to them."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Through an intermediary, who had to manumit. Dig. 40. 1. 4 pr. The peculium was a fund of which a slave had *de facto* control.

<sup>14</sup> Arangio-Ruiz, *Istituzioni*, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 34.

<sup>15a</sup> In particular it might be pleaded as a set-off (p. 454) and excluded the *condictio indebiti* (§ 575).

<sup>16</sup> Dig. 44. 7. 14.

1. 3. 5. 65. QUASI-SERVILE CONDITIONS.—Justinian says that all slaves are of one pattern. This requires some qualification. Some slaves of the Roman People were in a privileged position (§ 288). A slave manumitted conditionally (*statuliber*)<sup>17</sup> was, pending the condition, guaranteed by the praetor against abusive exercise of the master's rights and so were slaves manumitted informally or by a bonitary owner (§ 70) before the *lex Junia* gave them a special status.<sup>18</sup> A freeman in good faith treated as a slave (*liber homo bona fide serviens*)<sup>19</sup> was in an anomalous position, which gave rise to special rules; and there were a few other cases of qualified or restricted freedom.<sup>20</sup> In the later law the *coloni* formed a class apart. They were personally free, but bound to the soil.<sup>21</sup> Their *de facto* position was not far removed from slavery.

1. 4 pr. 66. If a man was not a slave he was free, either born free (*ingenuus*) or made free (*libertinus*).<sup>21a</sup> A free-born man was one born of free parents (free-born or free-made) or of a free mother. A free-made person (freedman) was one who had been manumitted from civil law slavery, that is not merely from slavery *de facto* or from slavery *jure gentium* resulting from hostile capture; for one who returned from foreign slavery recovered his former status by *postliminium* (§ 107).

1. 5 pr.

67. MANUMISSION.—The status of slavery might be brought to an end by manumission, when the slave's master took the appropriate steps to make him free. There were various modes of manumission, which may be distinguished as regular and irregular, or formal and informal. The regular or formal modes of manumission were—(a) *vindicta*, by a fictitious law-suit.<sup>22</sup> The process took its name from the wand (*vindicta*) with which the plaintiff (*adsertor libertatis*) touched the slave, alleging that he was free (§§ 656, 673). Long before Justinian this had become a mere formality. Hermogenianus (3rd or 4th century) says that the part of *adsertor* might be played by the praetor's lictor,<sup>23</sup> and ultimately manumission might take place on any day (not necessarily a Court day) and anywhere the magistrate was to be found, as for example when he was on his way to the bath or the theatre; (b) *censu*—by enrolment on the census; (c) *testamento*—by

1. 5. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Perhaps for *statuto liber* a man made free on terms. Dig. 40. 7. 1.  
<sup>18</sup> G. 3. 56.

<sup>19</sup> The phrase is misleading. It was the *bona fides* of the master which was relevant, not of the slave.

<sup>20</sup> Moyle, p. 112.

<sup>21</sup> Cod. 11. 52. 1; Buckl. M. p. 53.

<sup>21a</sup> In relation to his patron a *libertinus* was termed *libertus*, e.g., *Caesaris libertus*—Caesar's freedman.

<sup>22</sup> Or not fictitious? Buckl. M. p. 43

<sup>23</sup> Dig. 40. 2. 23.

will. Testamentary manumission might be direct—*Stichus servus meus liber esto*—"be my slave Stichus free", or *fideicommissary*—*fidei committo heredis mei ut Stichum servum manumittat*<sup>24</sup>—"I charge my heir with a trust to manumit my slave Stichus" (§ 346). In the first case he was said to be the dead man's freedman (*libertus orcinus*). He had no living patron, but the rights of patronage passed to the family of the testator.<sup>25</sup> In the second case the fiduciary manumitter was his patron. The irregular or informal modes of manumission were *inter amicos*—by declaring the man free amongst friends; *per epistolam*—by sending him a letter importing a gift of freedom; and, in the later Empire, *convivii adhibitione*—by asking him to dinner.<sup>25a</sup> Manumission before the Bishop in Church, as regulated by Constantine, may be regarded as formal, for it conferred citizenship on the manumitted slave, if other conditions were satisfied.<sup>26</sup> To these modes of manumission Justinian added some more, *e.g.*, appointing a slave your heir, even unaccompanied by an express gift of freedom, adopting him as your son, appointing him by will tutor to your son. All these modes of manumission were voluntary acts of the master. There were, besides, cases in which manumission took place independently of his wishes or in which a slave became free independently of manumission. These were cases in which the law converted the slave into a free man, either to reward the slave or to punish the master.<sup>27</sup> Instances of the latter kind were frequent in the later Empire. Thus the slaves of pagans, heretics and Jews became free on adopting Christianity. In some cases the magistrates manumitted or compelled the master to do so; in others freedom was acquired automatically. The history and consequences of manumission will be considered below. But first it will be convenient to say something about the legal condition of freedmen.

68. STATUS OF FREEDMEN.—A freedman was in an inferior position relatively to an ingenuus in the sphere both of public and of private law.<sup>28</sup> In the first, he was excluded from the Senate and from magistracies. In the second, marriage with freeborn persons was forbidden before the *lex Julia* of B.C. 18,<sup>29</sup> which restricted the prohibition to senators and

<sup>24</sup> Ulp. II. 7 & 8.

<sup>25</sup> Dig. 26. 4. 3, 3; Cod. 7. 6. 1, 7.

<sup>25a</sup> The phrase is taken from the *Epitome of Gaius* (§ 26). Theophilus in his Greek paraphrase of the *Institutes* (Jolowicz, p. 508) speaks of *manumissio per mensam*.

<sup>26</sup> Cod. I. 13. 2; Buckl., *The Roman Law of Slavery*, p. 450.

<sup>27</sup> Buckl. p. 598.

<sup>28</sup> Girard, p. 135.

<sup>29</sup> This was part of the legislation on marriage of Augustus—*lex Julia*.



their children, and further descendants for two generations in the male line.<sup>30</sup>

69. A freedman's relation to his patron is summed up in the words—*obsequium, operae, bona*.

(a) *Obsequium*. He owed respect to his patron, and might not bring an action against him except by permission of the magistrate. There was a reciprocal duty of support in case of need.

(b) *Operae*. The freedman was usually required to render services to his patron, by no means of a nominal character. The Digest contains many details as to what might, and might not, be demanded.<sup>31</sup> The obligation to render the services was usually secured by oath (§ 429).

3. 7 pr.

1. 17.

(c) *Bona*. By the Law of the Twelve Tables the patron succeeded to the *libertus*, if the latter died intestate without leaving a *suus heres* (§ 322), and together with this had the right or duty of tutelage. By the later law, he was entitled in certain events to take a share of the estate if the freedman had made a will, but by Justinian's legislation, if the freedman had children, he need not leave anything to his patron (§ 387). The status of freedman might be ended by imperial grant. By *restitutio natalium*, which may be translated "grant of birth-right", a *libertinus* was put in all respects upon an equality with an *ingenuus* just as if he had in fact been born free. Since this had the effect of excluding the patron's right of succession it was rarely accorded and only with the patron's consent.<sup>32</sup> A licence to wear a gold ring (*jus aureorum anulorum*) put him in the same position politically, leaving the patron's rights unaffected.<sup>33</sup> By Nov. 78. 1. (A.D. 539) Justinian bestowed upon all freedmen present and future both the above mentioned rights, but without prejudice to the patron's rights unless expressly renounced, and, in any event, with reservation of the duty of *obsequium* and the liability to be reduced to slavery for ingratitude (§ 61).

70. THE HISTORY OF MANUMISSION.—From early times manumission afforded an escape from slavery. While slaves were few manumissions were correspondingly infrequent. In

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de maritandis ordinibus.—de adulteriis—de fundo dotali—and the later *lex Papia Poppaea* (A.D. 9). Practically, these statutes constituted one marriage code and are so treated in the sources.

<sup>30</sup> Dig. 23. 2. 44 pr.

<sup>31</sup> Dig. 38. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Dig. 40. 11; Cod. 6. 4. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Dig. 40. 10. 5 and 6; 38. 2. 3, 1; *vivit quasi ingenuus, moritur quasi libertus*.

the last century of the Republic they became alarmingly numerous. Manumission by will was cheap and easy, and it might be some satisfaction to a dying man to think of a crowd of freedmen in new caps of liberty attending his bier.<sup>34</sup> Indiscriminate manumission had a bad effect upon the quality of the citizen body and Augustus sought to restrain it by the legislation to be presently mentioned, which remained on the statute-book until Justinian.

70A. The civil law recognised only formal manumission by a master who combined Quiritary title with effective ownership. Bare title (*nudum jus Quiritium*) gave no right to manumit.<sup>34a</sup> If manumission was informal, or the master "had the slave in his goods" merely (bonitary ownership, § 140) without civil law title, the man remained *de jure* a slave, though the praetor secured him in the *de facto* enjoyment of liberty. The lex Aelia Sentia of A.D. 4 added a further condition, viz. that, if the master was under twenty years of age, or the slave under thirty, manumission must be by vindicta after a just cause of manumission had been established to the satisfaction of a board (consilium) consisting at Rome of five senators and five knights (equites), and in the provinces of twenty Roman citizens selected from the panel of judges. In the first case, failure to satisfy this condition rendered the manumission void; in the second case the praetor gave the manumitted slave *de facto* protection.

71. A new situation was created by the lex Junia, which, if correctly described by Justinian as the lex Junia Norbana, must be dated A.D. 19, but which perhaps came before the lex Aelia Sentia. (Gaius describes it as lex Junia merely, which makes it possible to fix an earlier date).<sup>35</sup> From the early days of the Republic it had been the practice to establish "colonies" in Latium or other parts of Italy, whether as a military outpost or as a means of settling part of the urban population on the land. Later, the word "colony" described merely a particular form of civic government.<sup>36</sup> In a typical case the inhabitants of a colony, along with other privileges, enjoyed the right of trading with Roman citizens on equal terms and of employing Roman forms of contract and conveyance (*jus commercii*) as well as of making and taking under a Roman will (§§ 288, 293). This condition, which reflected

<sup>34</sup> . . . . . at illum  
Hesterni capite induto subiere Quirites.

<sup>34a</sup> Cod. 7. 10. 5.

Persius, 3. 105.

<sup>35</sup> Girard (p. 138) inclines to a date between B.C. 44 and B.C. 27.

<sup>36</sup> Moyle, p. 26.

the relation in which Rome had formerly stood to her Latin neighbours, was known as *Latinitas*, and the inhabitants as *Latini Coloniarii* (Colonial Latins).<sup>37</sup> In Italy colonies of this class ceased to exist when, during the Social War (B.C. 91-88), Roman citizenship was extended to the whole of Italy south of the river Po. But new grants of Latinity were made to towns or larger areas outside Italy. Thus the region between the river Po and the Alps (Transpadane Gaul) received Latin status by a law promoted by the consul Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo in the year B.C. 89, and in a later age the Emperor Vespasian conferred Latin right on the whole of Spain. Latinity had long since lost any geographical association. It was an intermediate stage on the road to citizenship, which implied the *jus commercii* but not the *jus conubii* (the right of contracting a civil law marriage, § 81). The communities which enjoyed this privilege took with it the name of Colonial Latins.<sup>38</sup> The term "Latin" having received this wide extension, there was no difficulty in applying it to the manumitted slaves upon whom the *lex Junia* in combination with the *lex Aelia Sentia* (§ 73) conferred a statutory status. Such were slaves manumitted informally, or by a bonitary owner (§ 140), or under the age of thirty, if the manumission did not satisfy the requirements of the *lex Aelia Sentia*, not to speak of some other cases of less frequent occurrence. But though, in principle, the Junian Latins, as they were called, were assimilated to Colonial Latins, the statute denied them the right of making or taking under a Roman will or of being appointed tutors by will.<sup>39</sup> The reason why they could not make a will is plain enough. The statute wished to secure to the manumitter the same control over the manumitted slave's property as he would have had over the *peculium* of the imperfectly manumitted slave if the statute had not been passed; and so, as Justinian says, "though they lived free, they lost their liberty and their life together". Why the statute did not allow them to take under a will is not easy to see. Perhaps there is no answer, except that it was so interpreted. In any event it was evaded or restricted, for:—(a) though a Junian Latin might not take under a will directly, he might do so by testamentary trust (*fideicommissum*)<sup>40</sup> (§ 346); and (b) soldiers, amongst other

G. 1. 17

G. 3. 56

3. 7. 4.

<sup>37</sup> G. 3. 56. The term *jus Latin* is applied specifically to the right of access to Roman citizenship accorded either to *decuriones* (§ 95) and office holders (*majus Latium*) or to office holders only (*minus Latium*) G. 1. 96.

<sup>38</sup> Ulp. XIX. 4.

<sup>39</sup> G. 1. 23. Colonial Latins usually had *testamenti factio* with Romans? Buckl. *T.* p. 289.

<sup>40</sup> G. 1. 24; 2. 275.

special privileges, were permitted to leave legacies to peregrines and Latins by a military will and to institute them heirs.<sup>41</sup> A Latin might qualify himself for taking under a will by acquiring citizenship, in one of the various ways open to him, within one hundred days of the testator's death.<sup>42</sup>

72. Another statute—the *lex Fufia Caninia* (B.C. 2)— G. 1. 42.  
 limited manumission by will to a varying proportion of the slaves owned and to one hundred at most.<sup>43</sup>

73. The *lex Aelia Sentia* contained numerous provisions relating to manumission and in particular:—(a) prohibited manumission in fraud of creditors.<sup>44</sup> For particulars see the text. This clause, unlike the rest of the statute, applied to peregrini as well as to cives; (b) created a very inferior status for slaves who before manumission had been subjected to severe punishment. They were to be in the same position as surrendered enemies (*peregrini dediticii*). They might not make a will or take under a will. They might not reside within one hundred miles of Rome under penalty of being sold into slavery without hope of manumission and in case of a purported manumission becoming slaves of the Roman People. Finally, they could not under any circumstances become citizens; (c) A Junian Latin might become a citizen by marrying before seven witnesses a citizen or a Latin or a person of like status with himself, and when he had a son one year old proving these facts to the satisfaction of the praetor or provincial governor. This was called *anniculi causae probatio* (proof of a claim based upon having a one-year-old child) or *causae probatio ex lege Aelia Sentia*. It applied under the statute only to the case of slaves freed under thirty. A *senatusconsultum* of A.D. 72 extended it to all Junian Latins. The provisions relating to the age of master and slave have been mentioned above (§ 70A). G. 1. 47.  
 G. 1. 13.  
 G. 1. 25.  
 G. 1. 29.  
 G. 1. 31.

74. The inferior types of free status were not affected by the constitution of Caracalla,<sup>45</sup> extending citizenship (with some uncertain limitations)<sup>46</sup> to the whole Roman world. But by the time of Justinian the status of *dediticii*, he tells us, had long since fallen into disuse, while the name of Latin had become infrequent. Accordingly by constitutions of 530 and 1. 5. 3.

<sup>41</sup> G. 2. 110.

<sup>42</sup> G. 1. 28; Ulp. XVII 1.

<sup>43</sup> G. 1. 42; Inst. 1. 7.

<sup>44</sup> G. 1. 36; Inst. 1. 6 pr.

<sup>45</sup> Dig. 1. 5. 17: In orbe Romano qui sunt ex constitutione imperatoris Antonini cives Romani effecti sunt. This is the only text except Nov. 78. 5, where the constitution is wrongly attributed to Antoninus Pius. (If anyone chooses to regard the fragmentary Giessen papyrus as a text he may add it to the list.) The Emperor known to historians as Caracalla was known to lawyers as Antoninus. The constitution of 212 is often cited as the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. <sup>46</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 59; Jolowicz, p. 357.

- 581 he put an end to both of them with the result, as he says, that "we have bestowed on all freedmen Roman citizenship with no discrimination as regards the age of the manumitted slave, the nature of the manumitter's ownership or the mode of manumission". This restored the law to its ancient simplicity by reducing all freedmen to a single type. It will be remarked that nothing is said as to the age of the master. In the Institutes Justinian allowed a master to manumit by will from the age of seventeen, which by Novel 119. 2. (A.D. 544) he reduced to fourteen for males, twelve for females, the age at which they were competent to dispose by will of their other property. After this nothing remained of the *lex Aelia Sentia* except the prohibition of manumission in fraud of creditors, and (it seems) the incapacity of masters under twenty to manumit *inter vivos*. The old *consilium* was plainly obsolete. We are not told what took its place.
1. 6. 7.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK I (TITs. III—VII)

#### TITLE III

##### *Of the law of persons*

- § 58. The principal divisions in the law of persons is that all men are either free or slaves.
1. Freedom, from which we get the description of men as free, is a man's natural capacity of doing what he pleases unless he is prevented by force or law. 2. Slavery is an institution of the *jus gentium* by which one man is made the property of another contrary to nature. 3. Slaves (*servi*) are so-called because military commanders order their captives to be sold, and so are used to preserve them alive (*servare*) instead of killing them. They are also called *mancipia* because they are taken from the enemy by the strong hand
- §§ 59—61 (*manu capiuntur*). 4. Slaves are either born slaves or made slaves. They are born of our female slaves. They are made slaves either by the *jus gentium*, that is by being taken captive, or by civil law, as when a free man upwards of twenty years of age suffers himself to be sold in order to share the price. 5. There is no difference in the condition of slaves. In the condition of free men there are many differences; for they are either born free (*ingenui*) or made free (*libertini*).
- § 65.

#### TITLE IV

##### *Of persons born free*

- § 66. A free-born person (*ingenuus*) is one who is free from birth, being the issue of parents both born free, or both made free, or one free-born, the other free-made. Even if the mother is free and the

father a slave, the issue is free-born, just as is the case when a free woman bears a child and the father is unknown, because the child was conceived promiscuously. It is enough for the mother to have been free at the time of birth, though she may have been a slave at the time of conception. Conversely, if she was free at the time of conception, and became a slave before the child was born, it is settled that the child is born free, for an unborn child ought not to be prejudiced by the mother's misfortune. Suppose then that a slave-woman conceives, then is manumitted, then enslaved again, and bears a son. Is he slave or free? Marcellus<sup>47</sup> favours the view that he is free, on the ground that it is enough that the unborn child had a free mother in the interval between conception and birth, and this is good law. 1. If a person is free-born he is not prejudiced by being at some time in *de facto* slavery and afterwards manumitted. Imperial constitutions have very often declared that manumission does not prejudice a man's birth-right.

## TITLE V

### *Of freedmen*

Freedmen are those who have been manumitted from legal slavery.<sup>48</sup> Manumission means a gift of freedom, for so long as a man is a slave he is under the hand and power of a master and by being manumitted, that is dismissed from hand, he is set free from power. This has its origin in the *jus gentium*. By natural law all men were born free, and manumission was unknown since slavery was equally unrecognised. Afterwards, the *jus gentium* introduced slavery and this was followed by the benefit of manumission; so whereas the word "men" is a common and natural appellation of all mankind, the *jus gentium* has made three classes of men, men who are free, men who are slaves, and thirdly, men who have ceased to be slaves, that is freedmen. 1. Manumission takes place in § 67. many ways, for it may be effected either in Holy Church, as the imperial laws provide, or by vindicta, or amongst friends, or by a letter, or by testament or other expression of a man's last will; and there are many other ways by which a slave may attain to freedom provided by the constitutions of earlier emperors and by our own. 2. Slaves may be manumitted by their masters upon any occasion, even in the street, as when the praetor or proconsul or governor is on his way to the bath or the theatre. 3. Formerly, there were §§ 70-3. three kinds of freedmen, for manumitted slaves either acquired complete freedom and became Roman citizens, or a lesser degree of freedom and became Latins by the *lex Junia Norbana*, or finally a yet lower degree of freedom and were reckoned as *dediticii*, as provided by the *lex Aelia Sentia*. But the degraded status of *dediticii* has long since passed out of use, while the name of Latin had become

<sup>47</sup> Ulpian Marcellus was a jurist of the time of Marcus Aurelius, the author of a Digest, *Responsa* and other works.

<sup>48</sup> Not from slavery *de facto*, as in the case of a free man wrongly supposed to be a slave (Tit. IV, 1, *supra*), or from slavery *jure gentium*.

infrequent. Therefore, our benevolence, anxious always to enlarge and to improve, has in two constitutions amended the law and restored the original position; for from Rome's earliest infancy there was a uniform, single freedom, the same for the manumitted slave as for the manumitting master, except, of course, that the first was a freedman and the master was free-born. First, then, we have put an end to the status of *dediticii*. This is effected by a constitution<sup>49</sup> promulgated amongst our decisions,<sup>50</sup> by which at the suggestion of the eminent *Tribonian* we have settled the controversies of the old law. Next, by another constitution,<sup>51</sup> which is a conspicuous ornament of our legislation, we have abolished the status of *Junian Latins* and all the law relating to them, and, admitting no distinction as regards the age of the manumitted slave or the nature of the master's ownership or the mode of manumission, we have, as above observed, bestowed Roman citizenship on all freedmen, providing also many additional ways by which slaves may attain freedom and with it citizenship, the only kind of freedom now allowed.

§ 74.

## TITLE VI

*Who may not manumit, and why?*

§ 73

§ 321.

§ 67.

Manumission is not permitted indiscriminately. Thus a manumission in fraud of creditors is without effect, for the *lex Aelia Sentia* bars the way to freedom. 1. Nevertheless, an insolvent master is permitted by his testament to institute a slave his heir together with a gift of freedom, so that the slave becomes free and sole and necessary heir, provided that there is no other heir under the will, either because no other person is instituted heir, or because the heir instituted by the will for some cause or other does not take the inheritance. This is provided by the same statute, and wisely; for it was a thing very much to be kept in view, that men in distressed circumstances, who were not likely to get anyone to succeed them, should have a slave as necessary heir who would satisfy the claims of creditors, and that, if he failed to do so, the creditors should sell the estate in the slave's name and save the reputation of the deceased. 2. The law is the same if a slave is instituted heir without a gift of freedom. For our constitution<sup>52</sup> benevolently provides, not merely in the case of an insolvent master, but as a principle of general application, that an institution as heir imports a gift of liberty; for it cannot be inferred from the fact that a testator has omitted to add a gift of freedom that he intended that the man whom he had chosen to be his heir should remain a slave, and that he should have no heir at all. 3. Manumission is understood to be in fraud of creditors, if the manumitting master is already insolvent, or will become insolvent in consequence of the

<sup>49</sup> Cod. 5. 6.<sup>50</sup> *Quinquaginta Decisiones* (*supra*, § 32).<sup>51</sup> Cod. 5. 7.<sup>52</sup> Cod. 6. 27. 5.

manumission. But the view has prevailed that a gift of liberty will not fail to take effect, even though the property of the estate is insufficient to meet the claims of creditors, unless the manumitter intended to defraud them; for men often hope that their means are more ample than they are in fact. So it is understood that manumission fails to take effect only when creditors are defrauded both by the manumitter's intention and by the actual consequence of the property being insufficient to satisfy their claims. 4. The same statute forbids a master under twenty years of age to manumit otherwise than by *vindicta*, a just cause of manumission having been established before the council. 5. There is a just cause of manumission, if, for example, a master manumits his natural father or mother or son or daughter, or brother or sister, his pedagogue,<sup>53</sup> his nurse, his governor,<sup>54</sup> his foster-brother, or foster-sister, or a slave who is to manage the manumitter's affairs, or a female slave with a view to marriage; provided, in this case, that marriage takes place within six months, unless there is some good reason to the contrary. A slave manumitted to manage a business must be not less than seventeen years of age. 6. Once a cause has been approved, the approval cannot be recalled, whether the cause be true or false. 7. Since, then, the *lex Aelia Sentia* prescribed a particular mode of manumission for masters under twenty years of age, it followed that, though from the age of fourteen anyone might make a will and institute an heir and leave legacies, nevertheless, if he was still under the age of twenty, he could not in his will give freedom to a slave. But it was intolerable that a person who was competent to dispose of all his property by will was not allowed to manumit by this method a single slave. Accordingly, we allow this to be done, provided that the master has completed his seventeenth and entered on his eighteenth year. This was the age at which the old law allowed a man to plead another's cause, and why should not a person who has reached this age be credited with enough sense to be able to confer liberty on his slaves? § 70. § 74.

## TITLE VII

### *Of the lex Fufia Caninia and its abolition*

The *lex Fufia Caninia* set a certain limit to the number of slaves who might be manumitted by will. Since this was an obstacle to manumission and to some extent invidious we have thought proper to abrogate it, for it was scarcely reasonable that a man should be allowed in his lifetime to bestow freedom on all his slaves, unless there was some good reason to the contrary, but should not be allowed to do so by his dying disposition.<sup>55</sup> § 72

<sup>53</sup> A pedagogue was a slave who took little children to school.

<sup>54</sup> Or "tutor" in the English sense.

<sup>55</sup> Further particulars in *Gaius* 1, 42—46.



## II. THE SECOND DIVISION OF PERSONS

*(Independent and dependent status)*

1. 8 pr. 75. All persons are either *sui juris* or *alieni juris*. Persons *alieni juris* are in the power of others, either of masters or of parents. The position of persons in the power of masters, *i.e.* slaves, has been considered above (§ 62). It remains to speak of children in the power of a father or remoter ascendant, in other words of the *patria potestas*. This was an institution which the Romans considered to be peculiar to themselves, but Gaius notes that something like it existed amongst the Galatians, and it is in fact an institution frequently found in a primitive state of society.
1. 9. 2.
- G. 1. 55.

76. *PATRIA POTESTAS*.—It is remarkable that neither Gaius nor Justinian has a word to say about the personal consequences of *patria potestas*. This in itself negatives the view that the law of persons means the law of the family. But the Roman writer of a textbook might assume an acquaintance with family conditions which cannot be imputed to the English reader. Something therefore must be said on the subject.

77. As regards the person of the son or other descendant, the power of the *paterfamilias* anciently included<sup>56</sup>:—1. the power of life and death (*jus vitae necisque*). The history of the Republic records instances of its exercise; 2. the power of sale either *trans Tiberim* into foreign slavery or within the city into the status of *mancipium* (§ 113); 3. the right to give the children in marriage and to divorce them at pleasure; 4. the right to give them in adoption and to emancipate them at pleasure.

4. 18. 6. 78. With scarcely any exception these powers or rights disappeared before or during the Empire. 1. The *jus vitae necisque*, long obsolete in practice,<sup>57</sup> was formally abolished by Constantine,<sup>58</sup> who decreed that a parent who killed his child should incur the horrible penalty of parricide. Paulus in a text cited in the Digest from the *Sententiae*<sup>59</sup> treats the abandonment of children as homicide, but it is doubtful whether the practice was forbidden by law before 374.<sup>60</sup>

2. Sale into actual slavery, not unknown in the third century,<sup>61</sup> survived even in Constantine's legislation, retained by

<sup>56</sup> Girard, p. 150.

<sup>57</sup> Paul already speaks of it in the past tense—*occidere licebat*. Dig. 28. 2. 11.

<sup>58</sup> Cod. 9. 17. 1. But according to another view the *jus vitae necisque* was extinguished in 365 by a constitution of Valentinian I. Cod. 9. 15. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Dig. 25. 3. 4.

<sup>60</sup> Cod. 9. 16. 7 (8); Girard, p. 153.

<sup>61</sup> Cod. 4. 43. 1; 7. 16. 1.

Justinian, permitting the sale of new-born children in case of extreme poverty<sup>62</sup> (§ 61). The noxal surrender of sons into mancipium was abolished only by Justinian.<sup>63</sup> 3. Marriage and divorce, from being a matter of arrangement between parents or an arbitrary exercise of paternal power, came to be regarded as questions which principally concerned the immediate parties.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, the consent of the child came to be a necessary condition of adoption<sup>65</sup> or emancipation.<sup>66</sup>

79. As regards property, the son in power was originally in no better position than a slave. Whatever he acquired was acquired for the paterfamilias. Like a slave he might be allowed the *de facto* enjoyment of a peculium. But by degrees the principle came to be admitted that a filiusfamilias might have a peculium not merely on sufferance, but of right:—

(a) From the time of Augustus soldiers were allowed to keep as their own what they acquired in military service (peculium castrense). This belonged to them for all purposes. They might dispose of it by will (§ 289), but before Hadrian only while serving. If they failed to do so, it reverted to the father in its character of peculium. It was only Justinian who gave the children and brothers and sisters of a deceased filius a preferent right of intestate succession. (b) Constantine and later Emperors extended the principle to what the son earned in various civil employments or the service of the Church (peculium quasi-castrense), which, however, before Justinian the son might not (generally) dispose of by will. (c) It was Constantine also who reduced (in effect) to a usufruct the father's interest in property coming to the son by inheritance from his mother (bona materna) (§ 103). This was extended by later Emperors to all other acquisitions derived from the mother or from her relations (bona materni generis), and ultimately to all acquisitions from any source not otherwise classified. These are comprehended under the general term of bona adventicia. The son never acquired even under Justinian the right of disposing of them by will during the father's lifetime, though they became his absolute property when his father died. If he died first the property went to the father (subject to prior claims) by right of succession, not by right

<sup>62</sup> Cod. 4. 43. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Inst. 4. 8. 7.

<sup>64</sup> Bene concordans matrimonium separari a patre divus Pius prohibuit. Paul Sent. 5. 6. 15; Dig. 43. 30. 5. But Justinian retained in the Code a constitution of Diocletian (Cod. 5. 17. 5), which permitted a p.f. to dissolve his daughter's marriage—*magna et justa causa interveniente*.

<sup>65</sup> Dig. 1. 7. 5; Cod. 8. 47 (48) 10 pr. *in fine*.

<sup>66</sup> Paul Sent. 2. 25. 5.

of peculium. The expression *peculium adventicium*, therefore, should be avoided. In case of emancipation imperial constitutions allowed the father to retain one third part of the *bona adventicia*, "as, so to say, the price of emancipation". Justinian substituted for this the usufruct of a half. (d) All this leaves unaffected the father's right to his own property confided to the son and to gains accruing from it. This was *peculium profectum a patre* or, as it is usually called on the analogy of *dos profecticia*, (§ 208) *peculium profecticium*. To the same head may be referred gifts made to the son with the intention of conferring a benefit upon the father (*contemplatione patris*), and gifts made by the father to the son, which remained without effect during the father's lifetime.<sup>67</sup>

80. The *patria potestas* came into existence in a variety of ways, and in particular by : 1, civil law marriage ; 2, legitimation ; 3, adoption ; 4, imperial rescript.

81. CIVIL LAW MARRIAGE (*justae nuptiae*—*justum matrimonium*).—Justinian summarises the conditions of marriage in the following sentence : "A civil law marriage is contracted by Roman citizens who are united according to law, males having reached years of puberty, females being of marriageable age, whether they be *sui juris* or in power, provided that children in power must have the consent of the *paterfamilias*". The requirements of a civil law marriage, therefore, were as follows :—

1. 10 pr.

82 (a). The husband must have the right to contract a civil law marriage with the wife (*conubium*—*jus conubii*). In the earliest period of Roman history there was general *conubium* between Romans on the one hand, and the inhabitants of Latium and the oldest colonies (§ 71) on the other (*prisci Latini*). Children followed the status of the father, citizen if he was citizen, Latin if he was not. In either case there was a marriage recognised by the Roman Courts. But to constitute a civil law marriage, both parties to the marriage must normally be citizens, for, in general, citizens alone had the power of contracting a civil law marriage. In the first two centuries of the Empire citizens individually, or as members of a community, were by special favour allowed to contract a civil law marriage with Latin or peregrine women.<sup>68</sup> Grants

<sup>67</sup> Girard, p. 155.

<sup>68</sup> Ulp. V, 3 & 4. *Conubium est uxoris jure ducendae facultas. Conubium habent cives Romani cum civibus Romanis ; cum Latinis autem et peregrinis ita si concessum sit.* Professor Last has kindly called my attention to the case of the municipality of Volubilis, which received from the Emperor Claudius a grant of citizenship and *conubium* with peregrine women. Cagnat & Merlin, *Inscriptions latines d'Afrique* (Paris, 1923), 634.

of the kind were frequently made to discharged soldiers.<sup>69</sup> After Caracalla's constitution the requirement of *conubium* lost most of its former importance. It continued to exclude marriage with *Latini Juniani* and *perēgrini dediticii*, so long as either status existed.

83. (b) The parties must be united according to law, *i.e.*, they must be competent to marry and to intermarry. The following could not marry at all: *viz.*, (i) persons already married.<sup>70</sup> There is no record that the Romans ever admitted polygamy; (ii) *castrati*<sup>71</sup>; (iii) in the early Empire soldiers during the term of service<sup>72</sup>; (iv) (in the later law) persons who had taken vows of chastity or been admitted to priest's orders.<sup>73</sup> Intermarriage was forbidden between:—(i) patricians and plebeians (anciently). This was ended by the *lex Canuleia* (B.C. 445); (ii) *ingenui(ae)* and *libertinae(i)*, until Augustus limited the prohibition to senators and their descendants to the third generation (§ 68); (iii) provincial governors and ladies of the province<sup>74</sup>; (iv) tutors and curators (or their sons) and their wards<sup>75</sup>; and (more important than any of the above) (v) persons within the prohibited degrees of relationship. For particulars reference may be made to the text. It is enough to say that marriage was forbidden between ascendants and descendants, and between collaterals any one of whom was removed by one degree only from the common ancestor. The same prohibitions applied to affinity as to blood relationship. For some three centuries a paternal uncle was allowed to marry his niece. This was because the law was changed to enable the Emperor Claudius to marry his brother's daughter Agrippina.<sup>76</sup> The marriage was not a success. Five years later she poisoned him with a dish of mushrooms.<sup>77</sup> The old law was restored by Constantine in 339.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> G. 1. 56.

<sup>70</sup> Inst. 1. 10. 6; Cod. 5. 5. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Dig. 23. 3. 39, 1.

<sup>72</sup> Corbett, p. 39.

<sup>73</sup> These are the *impedimenta voti et ordinis* of the Canon Law.

<sup>74</sup> Dig. 23. 2. 38 pr.

<sup>75</sup> Dig. 23. 2. 66 pr.

<sup>76</sup> G. 1. 62.

<sup>77</sup> *Boletus domino, sed quales Claudius edit,  
Ante illum uxoris, post quem non amplius edit.*  
(Juvenal, V. 147–8.)

"He feasts, secure, on mushrooms fine as those  
Which Claudius, for his special eating, chose,  
Till one more fine, provided by his wife,  
Finish'd at once his feasting, and his life."  
(Gifford's translation.)

<sup>78</sup> Cod. Theod. 3. 12. 1.

84. (c) The parties to the marriage must be of marriageable age. After controversy between the schools, this came to be fixed at fourteen for males, twelve for females.<sup>79</sup> These ages passed into the Canon Law and through the Canon Law into most modern systems. Now, however, the canonical age of marriage is sixteen for males and fourteen for females.<sup>80</sup> England followed the old Canon Law until the age was raised to sixteen for both sexes by the Age of Marriage Act, 1929.

85. (d) If a party to a marriage was in power the consent of the paterfamilias was a necessary condition. A grandson in power with an unemancipated father still living required the consent of grandfather and of father as well. This was in order that the father might not have a *suus heres* imposed upon him without his consent. The same consideration did not apply to a granddaughter. In her case the grandfather's consent was necessary and sufficient.<sup>81</sup> Difficulties arose in case the paterfamilias was insane or unreasonably refused his consent. They were felt to be more serious in the case of the son than of the daughter.<sup>82</sup> Justinian decided that in either case the consent of an insane parent was not required. The *dos* (§ 208) and *donatio propter nuptias* (§ 207) were to be settled by the appropriate authority. If consent was unreasonably withheld the *lex Julia* allowed the daughter, and, possibly, the son as well, to apply to a magistrate for leave to marry.<sup>83</sup> At all events this was the law for Justinian.

l. 10 pr.

86. (e) The consent of the parties is assumed to be necessary. It was so in Justinian's day as it had been for centuries before his time.<sup>84</sup> It is likely enough that in early times marriage was a matter of arrangement between the parents on both sides in law as it always might be in fact (§ 78).

87. Marriage, naturally, implies an agreement to marry. Anciently, in Rome as in Latium generally, this took the form of reciprocal stipulations (§ 430) or sponsiones (whence the word *sponsalia* meaning "betrothal").<sup>85</sup> The parties would normally be the intending husband, or his paterfamilias, and the paterfamilias of the intended bride. This practice was discontinued in Rome earlier than in Latium, where it lasted until Roman citizenship and with it Roman Law were

<sup>79</sup> G. 1. 196; Ulp. XI, 28; Inst. 1, 22 pr.

<sup>80</sup> *Cod. Jur. Can.* c. 1067.

<sup>81</sup> Dig. 23. 2. 16, 1.

<sup>82</sup> *Cod.* 5. 4. 25.

<sup>83</sup> Dig. 23. 2. 19; Corbett, p. 66.

<sup>84</sup> Dig. 23. 2. 2 (Paulus).

<sup>85</sup> Dig. 23. 1. 2.

extended to Latium during the Social War <sup>85a</sup> (§ 71). In the classical period mutual promises to marry created no legal obligation, so much so that to stipulate for a penalty to be paid in the event of marriage not taking place was held to be *contra bonos mores*.<sup>88</sup> In the later Empire a practice of eastern origin came into use, namely, for the man or woman or both to give something by way of earnest to guarantee the engagement (*arra sponsalicia*).<sup>87</sup> Like *arra* in the contract of sale (§ 450), with which it was closely allied, it served to penalize the party who withdrew from the engagement without just cause.

88. No ceremony, civil or religious, was necessary. Marriage was concluded by consent,<sup>88</sup> as it still is by Canon Law (§ 130) and until lately might be in Scotland. But something more precise was desirable to show that (and when) marriage had taken place. This consisted in a traditio of the wife to the husband, usually indicated by taking her to his house (*ductio in domum*).<sup>89</sup> Consistently with this, it was held that marriage might be concluded in the absence of the husband, but not of the wife.<sup>90</sup> It was, of course, fundamental that the parties had the intention to live together as husband and wife (*affectio maritalis*). There was nothing but this to distinguish marriage from concubinage (§ 93).

89. Roman marriage, of the type which became universal (or nearly so) in the classical age, was a relation of remarkable freedom. Marriage *per se* did not effect a transfer of the wife's property to the husband or give him any right of administration. She retained her contractual freedom, except that she could not make a gift to her husband, any more than he could to her. This was one reason why it was of importance to fix the moment at which marriage took place.<sup>91</sup> As the wife controlled her own property, so in law (it is thought) she was expected to provide for her own maintenance. It was not her husband's business to provide for her needs.

90. There was, however, an ancient system of a very different character by which the wife passed into the hand of her husband (in *manum viri*). *Manus* (§ 112) was a power scarcely distinguishable from *patria potestas*. The woman so married became a daughter to her husband and, if he was in power, a granddaughter to his father. If the husband died

<sup>85a</sup> By the *leges Julia* (B.C. 90) and *Plautia Papiria* (B.C. 89).

<sup>88</sup> Dig. 45. 1. 134 pr.

<sup>87</sup> Cod. 5. 1; Girard, p. 164, n. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Dig. 24. 1. 66.

<sup>90</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 112; *M.* p. 67. This was not of the essence of marriage. Dig 23. 2. 5.

<sup>91</sup> Paul *Sent.* 2. 19. 8.

<sup>91</sup> Cod. 5. 3. 6.

sui juris and intestate she shared the inheritance equally with her children. This system is commonly described as manus marriage, the other being called free marriage. Whether the latter already existed at the date of the Twelve Tables or was brought into existence by the Twelve Tables or came into existence, as some think, some centuries later, is a question which remains undecided. The manus marriage was obsolescent in the time of Gaius. It may have lingered on for about a century longer. Anciently it was brought into existence in one of three ways:—(a) by *confarreatio*. This was a religious ceremony, peculiar to patricians, which took place with a solemn form of words in the presence of ten witnesses. It took its name from the cake of spelt (*far*) which was offered to Jupiter *Farreus* (the Jupiter of the spelt cake)<sup>92</sup>; (b) by *coemptio*, an imaginary sale of the woman by the *paterfamilias* (or by herself if *sui juris*?) into the hand of the man she was to marry; (c) by use (*usu*). If a woman “remained married” for a whole year she passed into the hand of her husband, who acquired a proprietary right over her just as he might over any other movable property, by a year’s unbroken possession (§ 162). The Twelve Tables allowed her to interrupt the usucapion by staying away for three nights in each successive year (*trinoctium-trinoctio abesse*). This may have been the starting point of the free marriage, but Gaius in the passage just cited implies, if he is not writing carelessly, that she was married already and not in course of becoming married during the currency of the *usus* period. This manner of acquiring manus, Gaius says, “had partly been abolished by statute and partly fallen into disuse”. But he treats the other two methods as still in force, and says, in particular, that the greater *flamines*, that is priests of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus, and the *reges sacrorum* had to be the issue of marriage by *confarreatio*, and themselves thus married.<sup>93</sup> Papinian and Paul speak of *conventio in manum* as an existing institution,<sup>94</sup> and in the *Liber regularum* attributed to Ulpian, but thought to date from the early part of the fourth century, it is said to be effected *farreo*.<sup>95</sup> It is improbable that it survived the third century except in the narrow circle of the priesthood.

91. **DIVORCE.**—There is a story that divorce was unknown in Rome until about B.C. 227 (but different dates are given)

<sup>92</sup> Spelt was a kind of grain, the food of the primitive Romans.

<sup>93</sup> G. 1. 111–113. In A.D. 23 the Emperor Tiberius promoted a law providing that the wife of the priest of Jupiter (*flamen Dialis*) should pass in manum for religious purposes only (Tacitus, *Annals*, 4. 16). There had been earlier legislation. G. 1. 136; Buckl. *T.* p. 119; *M.* p. 72.

<sup>94</sup> *Coll.* 4. 2. 3; 4. 7. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Ulp. *Tit.* IX.

when one Spurius Carvilius Rufa put away his wife because she was incapable of bearing children. Like Shakespeare's Henry VIII he seems to have been troubled by conscience, for the censors had required him to take an oath that he married with a view to offspring.<sup>96</sup> The statement that divorce was previously unknown cannot be accepted. Cicero connects divorce with the Twelve Tables, Plutarch with Romulus. But we may believe that in early times it was infrequent. In the later Republic it became very common. As marriage came into existence by agreement and marital affection, so it was thought reasonable that it should cease to exist when these conditions were no longer present. This meant that the marriage bond might be severed by mutual consent (*divortium bona gratia*) or at the will of either party (*repudium*). In the latter event Augustus required, at least in some cases, a formal repudiation before seven witnesses (*lex Julia de adulteriis*). In the East it was the practice to send a bill of divorcement (*libellus repudii*) and this was made obligatory by Theodosius II and Valentinian III in A.D. 449.<sup>97</sup> This relates to the free marriage, which was the only marriage then in existence. As to the dissolution of *manus* marriages there is little information. Marriages contracted by *confarreatio* were sometimes dissolved by a contrary process called *diffarreatio*. The Christian Emperors decreed penalties of fantastic severity for causeless divorce, without, however, declaring it void until Justinian did so, but, as it happened, in the case least open to objection, namely, divorce by mutual consent. This was in the year 542.<sup>98</sup> The law was repealed in the year following Justinian's death.<sup>99</sup>

92. There were cases in which marriage was terminated by operation of law. If a father adopted his daughter's husband or his son's wife, the marriage became incestuous and was *ipso jure* dissolved (*incestus superveniens*). Loss of citizenship converted *justum matrimonium* into *matrimonium non justum* with loss of *potestas*. Enslavement *jure civili* of either spouse dissolved the marriage. There is some doubt as to the effect of captivity. It is generally supposed that before Justinian the marriage was dissolved and was not automatically re-established by *postliminium* (§ 107).<sup>100</sup> Under Justinian captivity did not *per se* dissolve the marriage, but if for five years the husband had not been known to be alive the wife was

<sup>96</sup> Aulus Gellius, IV. 3.

<sup>97</sup> Cod. 5. 17. 8 pr.

<sup>98</sup> Nov. 117. c. 10.

<sup>99</sup> Nov. 140

<sup>100</sup> Dig. 49. 15. 12, 4; 14, 1.



free to remarry.<sup>1</sup> Apart from this, absence, however prolonged, though without news, left the marriage unaffected.<sup>2</sup>

93. Concubinage was a tolerated condition which was only distinguished from marriage by the absence of *affectio maritalis*. Like marriage it was permanent—while it lasted—and monogamous. It was contrary to law for a man to have a wife and a concubine at the same time.<sup>3</sup> The issue was illegitimate (*liberi naturales*), but not promiscuous (*spurii*), and might be legitimated, as will presently appear (§ 95).

94. A marriage between peregrines, if valid by the laws and customs of the community to which they belonged, was *matrimonium*, but not *justum matrimonium*. The Roman Courts recognised and gave effect to it. There was no *patria potestas*, but the children were held to be legitimate and took their father's status. By a *senatusconsultum* passed at the instance of the Emperor Hadrian the same consequence followed when a peregrine husband married a citizen wife. G. 1. 55. The son was *justus patris filius*. Previously this would not have been the case unless the peregrine by special favour had the *jus conubii*. The *senatusconsultum* did not apply to the converse case of a citizen husband marrying a peregrine wife. G. 1. 77. This was a relation which the Roman Law did not encourage. Antony's marriage with Cleopatra (B.C. 37) would not have been "marriage", even if he had first divorced Octavia, which he did only five years later.

95. LEGITIMATION.—There were various ways in which natural children might be legitimated and brought under the power of their father. These were :—(a) by subsequent marriage (*legitimatio per subsequens matrimonium*). This was introduced by Constantine to encourage marriage with existing concubines. After much intermediate legislation Justinian established this method of legitimation subject to certain conditions :—(i) The parents must have been legally capable of intermarriage when the child was conceived; (ii) a marriage contract must be drawn up in order that no doubt might exist as to the transition from concubinage to matrimony; and (iii) the child must acquiesce.<sup>4</sup> Previous Emperors had made it a condition that there should not be legitimate children by a previous marriage. Justinian dispensed with this requirement.<sup>5</sup> It will be remarked that this indulgence was given only in favour of the issue of concubinage. It did not apply

<sup>1</sup> Dig. 24. 2. 6 (interpolated?); Buckl. *M.* p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Nov. 117, c. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Paul *Sent.* 2. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Nov. 89. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Nov. 12. 4.

to illegitimate children in general. The Christian Emperors had continued to tolerate an institution which they disapproved and discouraged. Justinian's legislation without a fundamental change of attitude in effect recognised it as what Hunter calls "a species of left-handed marriage". The Church made no distinction between the offspring of concubinage and of more promiscuous relations, but in any case admitted legitimization by subsequent marriage, excluding only the issue of an adulterous union, and with or without this limitation the institution has passed into modern systems of law. The desire of the clergy to make it part of the law of England was so successfully resisted by the barons, as recorded in the Statute of Merton, A.D. 1235-36, that very nearly seven centuries elapsed before it found its way into the statute book in the Legitimacy Act, 1926; (b) by making a son a member (or marrying a daughter to a member) of the council of a municipality (*decurio*). This was a function which entailed heavy financial liabilities, and people were compelled or bribed to undertake it. Legitimation in this case is said to take place *per oblationem curiae*—"by offering to a municipal council"; (c) by imperial rescript (*per rescriptum principis*). This method of legitimization was admitted by Justinian when, the concubine being already dead, marriage was out of the question,<sup>6</sup> and in some other circumstances. 1. 10. 13.

96. THE STATUS OF CHILDREN.—Before leaving the subject of marriage a few words may be said about the status of children. Reference has been made above to the general principle that, where there is *conubium* between the parents, the children follow the status of the father at the time of conception, but where there is no *conubium* the status of the mother at the time of birth (§ 59).<sup>7</sup> It would follow from this that the issue of a peregrine father and a citizen mother would be citizen, just as in the converse case the issue would be peregrine. But this rule of the *jus gentium* was qualified by a *lex Minicia* which laid down the rule that where one parent was peregrine, the other citizen, the issue should always have the inferior status. This statute, of uncertain date, but before the Social War, included Latins under the head of peregrines. This meant the inhabitants of Latin communities in Italy (§ 71). The statute was not extended to Junian Latins. It followed that the issue of a Junian Latin father and a citizen mother was citizen. There had been some doubt with regard to marriages contracted under the *lex Aelia Sentia* (§ 73). It G. 1. 78. G. 1. 79.

<sup>6</sup> Nov. 74.

<sup>7</sup> Ulp. V, 8.

G. 1. 80.

was argued that in this case there was a statutory *conubium* between the parties and "conubium always has the effect that the issue follows the status of the father". But a *senatus-consultum* promoted by the Emperor Hadrian provided that in any event the issue of a Latin father and a citizen mother should be citizen. If both parties were peregrine and lawfully married the child took the father's status (§ 94).

97. ADOPTION.—This is another way in which *patria potestas* was brought into existence. Adoption was of two kinds, *viz.*, (a) of a person *sui juris*, specifically called *adrogatio*, and (b) of a person *alieni juris*, which had no specific name.<sup>8</sup> We must inquire how each of these was effected and what were its legal consequences.

G. 1. 99.

98. *Adrogation* was effected in the time of Gaius by a legislative act of the *comitia curiata* or *calata*. This kind of adoption was called *adrogation* because the adopting father was asked (*rogatur*) whether he wished that the person he was going to adopt should be his lawful son, the person to be adopted was asked whether he suffered it to be so and the People was asked whether it was pleased so to enact. This explains what Gaius means when he says that *adrogation* was effected "by the authority of the people". But this procedure was a formal survival from ancient times. The essence of the matter was an inquiry by the pontiffs, who had to be satisfied that the *adrogation* was desirable and that the interests, religious and material, of the *adrogatus* and his gens were duly protected. The *adrogator* had to be at least sixty years of age and childless.<sup>9</sup> If the pontiffs gave their approval, the question was submitted *pro forma* to the People, that is to the thirty *lictors* who represented the thirty *curiae*. This method of *adrogation* from its nature could only be resorted to in the city of Rome.<sup>10</sup> In the provinces it was replaced by an imperial rescript granted after inquiry by the local magistrate, and this came to be used at Rome, first, as an alternative, and, from the time of Diocletian, or later, to the exclusion of the older procedure. In the time of Justinian it was the only method in use. Adoption by will common in the late Republic and early Empire has been supposed to be a kind of *adrogation*.<sup>11</sup> But perhaps it was merely an institution as heir with a direction to take the testator's name.<sup>12</sup>

1. 11. 1.

99. Women, according to the prevailing view, could not be

<sup>8</sup> Aulus Gellius (V. 19) calls it *adoptatio*.

<sup>9</sup> Dig. 1. 7. 15, 2; 17, 3.

<sup>10</sup> G. 1. 100.

<sup>11</sup> Girard, p. 190.

<sup>12</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 79.

adrogated *populi auctoritate*, because they could not take part in the proceedings of the *comitia*. There was not the same difficulty in the case of adrogation by imperial rescript.<sup>13</sup> But essentially adrogation was intended to keep a Roman family alive by providing for its continuance in the male line of descent, so that the adrogation of females can only have been admitted when the institution had already changed its character. G 1. 101.

100. The adrogation of *impuberes*, Gaius says, was at one time prohibited, later permitted.<sup>14</sup> The difficulty was that the child could not consent unaided, and tutors were not generally considered competent to give their authority in a matter of such grave concern.<sup>15</sup> The Emperor Antoninus Pius in a letter to the pontiffs allowed the adrogation of *impuberes* subject to stringent conditions. First, an inquiry must be held (this indeed was common to all adrogations); secondly, the adrogator must give security to restore the property to the family or to the *adrogatus* in the event of his dying or being emancipated while still *impubes*. He was not to be emancipated except for just cause, after inquiry; thirdly, if the adrogator died before the *adrogatus* the latter was to have his property returned to him and in addition, if disinherited or if he had been emancipated without just cause, to receive one fourth of the adrogator's estate. This was known as the *quarta Antonina*. It was a special case of the provision for children which came to be known as the *legitim* (§ 304). It may be that these or like conditions were usually required by the pontiffs. The imperial rescript dealt specifically with the adrogation of an *impubes* and termination of *potestas* while the child was still *impubes*.<sup>16</sup> It might be thought obvious that a female could not adrogate, and indeed females could not adopt at all in the proper sense of the word, but a quasi-adoption by women even of a person *sui juris* was permitted by Diocletian whereby the adopted person acquired the rights of a natural-born child.<sup>17</sup> 1. 11. 3. 1. 11. 10.

101. The legal consequences of adrogation were as follows :— 1. 11. 11.  
(i) The *adrogatus* and children in his power, if any, passed into the power of the adrogator; (ii) the property of the *adrogatus* of whatever kind, and debts due to him, passed to the adrogator by a kind of universal succession (§ 388)<sup>18</sup>; G. 3. 83

<sup>13</sup> Dig. 1. 7. 21.

<sup>14</sup> G. 1. 102.

<sup>15</sup> Dig. 1. 7. 17, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> Cod. 8. 47. 5.

<sup>18</sup> But see below § 103.

(iii) debts due by the adrogatus and (before Justinian) the personal servitudes of usufructus and usus (§ 230) were extinguished as a consequence of the extinction of his old persona resulting from the adrogation. Inherited debts were not thus affected. The reason was that an inheritance was treated as a single res (§ 136). The adrogator could not take its benefit, if any, without taking the attendant burden. He was regarded as heir of the deceased, as he would have been *ab initio* if the adrogatus had been a natural-born son and had accepted the inheritance by his father's order. Obligations ex delicto also survived the adrogation. They became noxal liabilities (§ 621) of the adrogator, but continued to be personal liabilities of the adrogatus, enforceable against him directly, if he again became sui juris.

102. Such was the situation at civil law. But to save creditors from seeing their just claims defeated by an operation over which they had no control the praetor gave them a utilis actio (§ 682) against the adrogatus, based upon the fiction that there had been no change of status (§ 758), and, if the adrogator failed to defend the action in his name, allowed the property which had come to him from the adrogatus to be taken in execution to satisfy the plaintiff's claim.<sup>19</sup> Justinian says that in such circumstances the adrogator is not liable in law, but may be sued in the name of the son with the consequences above described. If he defends the action he does so at his own risk.

103. Gains and Justinian agree in describing adrogatio as a mode of universal acquisition. But Justinian goes on to say that he had reduced it to a usufruct as in the case of natural parents.<sup>20</sup> Since everything which the adrogatus took with him into his new family (not being peculium castrense or peculium quasi-castrense) necessarily came under the description of bona adventicia,<sup>21</sup> in which the paterfamilias merely had a usufruct, it is evident that acquisition by adrogation was in fact a thing of the past. Justinian might very well have treated it as obsolete. His change in the law was formal, not substantial. By the legislation of Constantine and his successors the pater remained technically dominus of the bona adventicia,<sup>22</sup> though without power of alienation, in effect a usufructuary. Constantine calls him dominus possessionis.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> G. 3. 84; 4. 38. Though there was no express provision in the Edict, the praetor gave a similar remedy in case of loss of liberty or citizenship in eos ad quos bona pervenerunt eorum. Dig. 4. 5. 2 pr.

<sup>20</sup> G. 2. 97, 98; 3. 83; Inst. 2. 9. 6; 3. 10. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Buckl. T. p. 398, n. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Buckl. T. p. 280, n. 16.

<sup>23</sup> Cod. 6. 60. 1.

In Justinian's system he was usufructuary in law as he had previously been in fact. If the *adrogatus* died in potestate the property went to the father, subject to the prior claims of the issue of the *adrogatus* and of brothers and sisters.<sup>24</sup> Another change in the law made by Justinian was that *usus* and *usufructus* were not extinguished by *adrogation*.

3. 10. 1.

104. Adoption in the narrower sense was effected in the old law by a series of sales and *manumissions* terminating in a decree of the magistrate declaring the child to be the child of the adopting father.<sup>25</sup> This was a fictitious application of the rule of the Twelve Tables: "If a father sells his son three times, the son shall be free from his father's power".<sup>26</sup> Gaius describes the procedure as follows:—

"The father *mancipates* his son to someone: he *manumits* § 146.  
*vindicta*<sup>27</sup>; the son immediately reverts to the father's power. The father again *mancipates* to the same person or to another (usually to the same); he *manumits*; the son again reverts to his father's power; then the father *mancipates* for the third time to the same person or to another (usually to the same)."

This breaks the *patria potestas*. The son is now in the *mancipium* of the person to whom he has been *mancipated*, § 113. who will usually be the adopter (*infra*). But he does not wish to retain him in *mancipio* but to have him for a son. To complete the process the son must be re-*mancipated* to the natural father, and claimed from him as son in a fictitious action brought by the adopter (*in jure cessio*).<sup>28</sup> If the last *mancipation* was made to a third person, re-*mancipation* to the father was unnecessary. But it was more convenient to make the *mancipations* to the adopter, for it reduced the *dramatis personae* from three to two. For the adoption of a daughter or grandchild one *mancipation* was held to be sufficient. For this elaborate fiction Justinian substituted a declaration before the magistrate followed by a magisterial order and registration 1. 12. 3. in Court, all the parties concerned, the person to be adopted included, consenting. Both Gaius and Justinian say that the adoption of a person *alieni juris* is effected "by order of the magistrate" (*imperio magistratus*). But what for Gaius is the concluding step, for Justinian is substantially the whole process of adoption.

105. The effect of adoption before Justinian was, as in the case of *adrogation*, to pass the *adoptatus* into the power of the

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<sup>24</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 281.

<sup>25</sup> G. 1. 99, 134.

<sup>26</sup> G. 1. 132; Ulp. X. 1.

<sup>27</sup> G. 1. 138.

<sup>28</sup> G. 1. 134.

adopter. Justinian made a fundamental change by limiting this to the case of adoption by a natural ascendant, such as a maternal grandfather; or a paternal grandfather, if an emancipated son gave his son in adoption to his own father. The commentators call this *adoptio plena*, because it produced all the old effect of adoption. In other cases (*adoptio minus plena*) there was no change of *patria potestas*, but the adoptatus acquired a right of intestate succession to the adopting father. Apart from this, there was merely a *de facto* change of family with some legal consequences such as reciprocal duty of support. There is said to be another case of *adoptio plena*, viz., when the person given in adoption is not a presumptive *suus heres* of the person giving him in adoption; e.g. a grandfather gives his grandson in adoption, retaining his son in power. But it seems that in this case the *potestas* did not pass, or, if it did, it reverted if the death of the father before the grandfather made the grandson a presumptive *suus heres* of the grandfather.<sup>29</sup>

106. Imperial rescript was another way of creating *patria potestas*, e.g. if a Latin or peregrine obtained by this method a grant of citizenship, children already born might at the same time be declared to be in his power. Without such a declaration they continued to be *sui juris*.<sup>30</sup>

107. *POSTLIMINIUM*.—If a *paterfamilias* returned from foreign slavery he resumed his power over his children. Similarly, if a child returned he reverted to his father's power. This was called *postliminium*, because the person concerned re-crossed the threshold (*limen*) of the Roman State.

108. There were other ways in which *potestas* might come into existence to which it will be enough to make a passing reference, such as *anniculi causae probatio ex lege Aelia Sentia* (§ 73), and numerous cases in which a person who had married in ignorance of his or his wife's real status was allowed to get the matter put right (*erroris causae probatio*). One instance may suffice :—

G. 1. 67. "A Roman citizen marries a Latin or peregrine woman in ignorance as to her real status believing her to be a citizen and she has borne him a son, the son will not be in the father's power because he will not even be a Roman citizen but a Latin or a peregrine (there being no *conubium* between the parents he follows the status of the mother); but by a *senatusconsultum* he is permitted to prove the cause of error, and so his wife and his son are admitted to Roman citizenship and thenceforward the son begins to be in the power of his father."

<sup>29</sup> Buckl. T. p. 123; M. p. 78.

<sup>30</sup> G. 1. 93, 94.

With the extension of citizenship to the whole Empire this method of acquiring potestas passed out of use.

109. We have spoken of the ways in which patria potestas came into existence. It remains to speak of the ways in which it ceased to exist. These were :—1. Death of the paterfamilias, but on the death of a grandfather unemancipated grandchildren did not become sui juris, for they fell under the power of their father; 2. Any change of status in father or son involving loss of freedom or citizenship or family; and, in particular, the emancipation of the son or his being given in adoption, any adoption before Justinian, but in consequence of his legislation, adoptio plena only. Emancipation was effected in the time of Gaius by a fictitious process similar to that used in the case of adoption (§ 104),<sup>31</sup> the only difference being that in the final stage the person concerned was claimed as free (vindicatio in libertatem), not as a son. The Emperor Anastasius, A.D. 502, where the absence of the son made this process impossible, allowed the same effect to be produced by imperial rescript followed by registration in Court.<sup>32</sup> Justinian abolished the old fictions<sup>33</sup> and made even the rescript unnecessary, believing that the matter could safely be left to the persons concerned. He required merely a declaration before the magistrate, the son consenting or at least acquiescing, and registration in Court, as in the case of adoption; 3. In general, no public office or dignity affected the relations of father and son. But Justinian enacted that the eminent dignity of the patriciate should release the person thus honoured from patria potestas. By Novel 81 he attached the same consequence to the consulship and other dignities.

110. The emancipation of a natural-born son, we are told, terminated the rights of agnation, not of cognation. Thus the praetor allowed the emancipated son to succeed to his father ab intestato in the class unde liberi (§ 374). But the emancipation of an adopted son terminated all relations with the family of adoption. In his family of origin he counted as an emancipated son. Justinian says that there is scarcely any way in which natural or adoptive children can compel their parents to emancipate them. The impubes adoptatus could do so on reaching puberty, if he could show good cause.<sup>34</sup> A father instituted heir on condition of emancipating his children was bound to do so.<sup>35</sup> Trajan, we are told, compelled emancipation by a father who was ill-treating his son.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> G. 1 132.

<sup>33</sup> Cod. 8. 49. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Sent. 4. 13. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Cod. 8 49 5.

<sup>34</sup> Dig. 1. 7. 33

<sup>36</sup> Dig. 37. 12. 5.



111. **CAPITIS DEMINUTIO.**—The origin of this institution is obscure and has been the subject of much speculation. The following remarks are confined to the developed doctrine which is the same for Gaius in the second century as for Justinian in the sixth. *Capitis deminutio* means a change of status, which takes place :—(i) when a man loses freedom and citizenship by being reduced to slavery. This is called *capitis deminutio maxima*; (ii) when a man loses citizenship, but retains his freedom. This happened in the old law when a man was interdicted from fire and water,<sup>37</sup> which meant, in effect, compelled to go into exile, as happened to Cicero in B.C. 58. Under the Empire a sentence of deportation (but not of relegation) to an island had the same effect. This is called *capitis deminutio minor* or *media*; (iii) when citizenship and freedom are retained but a man's family is changed whether (according to our way of thinking) for the worse or for the better. This is *capitis deminutio minima*. It takes place when a person who is *sui juris* becomes *alieni juris*, or conversely. Thus, not only does a *paterfamilias* undergo *capitis deminutio* by being *adrogated*, but a *filiusfamilias* undergoes *capitis deminutio* by being emancipated. In the old process of emancipation every mancipation and every manumission was a *capitis deminutio*.<sup>38</sup> It is plain from all this that *capitis deminutio* in general cannot be described as a descent in the ladder of status. If a man having a son in power was *adrogated*, not only he but his son too underwent *capitis deminutio*. In each case there was a change of family.<sup>39</sup>

112. **MANUS.**—In Justinian's law *potestas*, in its two forms of *dominica potestas* and *patria potestas*, stands alone as a source of dependent status. But for Gaius there were two other institutions which subjected one person to the authority of another, namely *manus* and *mancipium*. They are not mentioned by Justinian because *manus* was obsolete (§ 90) and *mancipium* was abolished by his own legislation. But, since some knowledge of these institutions is necessary for the understanding of the course of historical development, they will be shortly noticed. *Manus* has been explained above in connection with marriage. But it might also exist without marriage. Gaius tells us that *coemptio* might be made either for the purpose of marriage or by way of trust<sup>40</sup> (*fiduciae causa*). This last was a contrivance which enabled a woman to change her tutor. She made a *coemptio* to a male person,

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<sup>37</sup> G. 1. 161.

<sup>38</sup> G. 1. 162.

<sup>39</sup> Dig. 4. 5. 3.

<sup>40</sup> G. 1. 114.

not her husband, for that would have placed her in the position of daughter. This person, termed the coemptionator, into whose manus she had passed, mancipated her to another person of her choice, and he in turn manumitted her vindicta, thereby becoming her fiduciary tutor (§ 118), and if she wished to make a will (which may have been the object in view) she could do so by his authority. It seems that the same trick was sometimes employed for evading the burden of family sacred rites.<sup>41</sup> Normally, a woman was released from manus by the process of emancipation in use in the case of a daughter, namely by a single mancipation followed by re-mancipation and manumission, but with the difference, as Gaius points out, that, whereas a daughter could not in any way compel her father to emancipate her, a married woman could escape from manus by sending a letter of divorce.<sup>42</sup> This is evidently a late development, which can only have been admitted when manus was already a decaying institution.

113. MANCIPIUM (CIVIL BONDAGE).—This was the 'status resulting from the mancipation of a free person.<sup>43</sup> It occurred when a father made a noxal surrender of his son (§ 621), or in the process of adoption or emancipation, or in the case of a woman in the circumstances above described.<sup>44</sup> In the first, case, practically limited to male children, it created a relation between the person mancipated and the person to whom the mancipation was made which continued, at all events in historical times, only until the delinquent had by his labour made good the damage.<sup>45</sup> In the other cases the status was usually momentary.<sup>46</sup> A person in *mancipio* remained a free man and was not to be treated with contumely. If he was, he had an *actio injuriarum* (§ 598). But he was in a quasi-servile position. Like a slave he could not be instituted heir by his master, unless at the same time given his liberty.<sup>47</sup> Like a slave he acquired for his master.<sup>48</sup> Like a slave he was set free by manumission; which might be *censu*, *vindicta* or *testamento*.<sup>49</sup> By manumission he became *sui juris* and did not revert into his father's power, the mancipation (it was disputed whether it must be thrice repeated or one was enough) having extinguished the *potestas*.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Poste, p. 71.

<sup>42</sup> G. 1. 137.

<sup>43</sup> G. 1. 117, 118.

<sup>44</sup> G. 1. 118 (a).

<sup>45</sup> *Coll.* 2. 3.

<sup>46</sup> G. 1. 141.

<sup>47</sup> G. 1. 123.

<sup>48</sup> G. 2. 86.

<sup>49</sup> G. 1. 138.

<sup>50</sup> G. 4. 79.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK I (Tits. VIII—XII, XVI)

## TITLE VIII

*Of persons sui juris and persons alieni juris*

§ 75. There follows another division of the law of persons. For some persons are *sui juris*, others are *alieni juris*; and of these last some are in the power of parents, others in the power of masters. Let us consider then the persons who are *alieni juris*, for when we know who these are, we shall understand at the same time who are *sui juris*; and first let us see who are in the power of masters.

§ 62. 1. In the power of masters, then, are slaves. This power is created by the *jus gentium*, for amongst all peoples it may be seen that masters have over their slaves the power of life and death, and whatever is acquired through a slave is acquired for the master. 2. But today no men subject to our rule are allowed to do violence to their slaves without lawful cause or beyond measure. For a constitution of the Emperor Antoninus Pius directs that anyone who without cause kills his own slave is to be punished just as much as if he had killed some other person's slave. More than this, a constitution of the same Emperor restrains excessive harshness of masters. For, being consulted by certain provincial governors about slaves who fly for refuge to temples or to the statues of the Emperor, he directed that, if the masters appeared to have used intolerable severity, they should be compelled to sell their slaves on fair conditions, receiving the purchase price; and rightly so, for it is in the public interest that a man should not misuse his property. These are the words of the Emperor's rescript to Aelius Marcianus: "The power of masters over their slaves should not be restricted, and no one should have his right taken from him. But it is in the interest of masters that relief against cruelty or starvation, or intolerable wrong, should not be denied to slaves who justly invoke it. Do you, therefore, inquire into the grievances of those of the establishment of Julius Sabinus who have fled to our statue, and if you find that they have been treated with undue severity, or shamefully ill-used, order them to be sold on the terms that they are not to revert to their master's power. And let Sabinus take notice, that if he attempts to evade my decree, I will visit his offence with severe punishment."

## TITLE IX

*Of patria potestas*

Children begotten in lawful wedlock are in the power of parents. 1. Wedlock or marriage is a union of male and female involving an undivided habit of life. 2. The legal power which we have over our children is peculiar to Roman citizens; for no other men have the power over their children that we have. 3. The child born to you and to your wife is in your power, also the child born to your son

§ 75.

and his wife, that is your grandson and granddaughter, and your great-grandchild and so forth. But a child born to your daughter is not in your power, but in the power of the child's father.

## TITLE X

### *Of marriage*

A civil law marriage is contracted by Roman citizens who are united according to law, males having reached years of puberty and females being of a marriageable age, whether they be *sui juris* or in power, provided that children in power must have the consent of the *paterfamilias*. Civil law and natural reason agree in requiring this consent, and that the parent's authority should be given before marriage. Hence the question arises whether the daughter of a madman can marry or the son of a madman take to himself a wife. As regards the son opinions differed, but our constitution<sup>51</sup> allows a son, as a daughter already might, to enter upon marriage without parental consent when the father is insane, in accordance with the procedure therein prescribed.

1. Marriage is forbidden within certain degrees of relationship. First, ascendants and descendants may not intermarry, for example father and daughter, grandfather and granddaughter, mother and son, grandmother and grandson, and so on *ad infinitum*. Marriage between such persons is wicked and incestuous. This is so far the case that even when the relationship of parent and child is created by adoption, marriage between them is impossible, and this continues to be so even after the tie created by adoption has been dissolved. Consequently, you cannot marry a woman who has become your daughter or granddaughter by adoption, even though you have emancipated her.

2. There is a similar prohibition of marriage between collaterals, but not so stringent. Of course, marriage is prohibited between brothers and sisters, whether they have in common both parents or one parent only. But if a woman has become your sister by adoption, so long as the adoption continues you cannot marry her, but you may marry her when the adoption has been dissolved by her being emancipated, and, similarly, if you have been emancipated, there is nothing to prevent your marrying her. It is therefore settled that if a man wishes to adopt his son-in-law, he should first emancipate his daughter; and if he wishes to adopt his daughter-in-law, he should first emancipate his son. 3. A man may not marry his brother's or sister's daughter, or granddaughter, though the latter is related to him in the fourth degree; for whenever it is not lawful to marry a person's daughter neither is it lawful to marry that person's granddaughter. But there seems to be no objection to your marrying the daughter of a woman whom your father has adopted as his daughter, because there is no bond between you either by natural or by civil law. 4. The children of two brothers or of

<sup>51</sup> Cod. 5. 4. 25.

two sisters or of brother and sister may intermarry. 5. A man may not marry his father's sister, even a sister by adoption, nor his mother's sister, because they are reckoned amongst parents. On the same principle marriage with a great-aunt is forbidden. 6. Out of respect for affinity some marriages must not be contracted. For example, a man may not marry his step-daughter or daughter-in-law, for each of them stands to him in the relation of daughter. This must be understood to mean a woman who was his daughter-in-law or step-daughter. For if she still is your daughter-in-law, that is, if she is still married to your son, there is another reason why you cannot marry her, namely, that you cannot be married to two women at once: for the same reason you cannot marry your step-daughter while you are still married to her mother. 7. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or his step-mother, because each of them is deemed to be a mother to him. This holds good even when the relation no longer exists, for if a woman is still your step-mother, that is, is still married to your father, on general principles you cannot marry her: similarly you cannot marry her if she is still your mother-in-law, that is, if her daughter is still your wife. 8. But a husband's son by a former wife and a wife's daughter by a former husband, or conversely, may intermarry, notwithstanding they have a brother or sister born of the second marriage. 9. If your wife has been divorced from you, and has had a daughter by a second husband, she is not your step-daughter, but Julian says that we should refrain from such a marriage. For neither is the woman betrothed to your son your daughter-in-law, nor is the woman betrothed to your father your mother-in-law, but it is more right and proper (he says) to refrain from such marriages.

§ 64 10. There is no doubt that the relationships of slaves are an obstacle to marriage, if, for example, father and daughter, or brother and sister have been manumitted. 11. There are other persons who for different reasons may not intermarry. These cases will be found enumerated in the Digest.

12. If a union is contracted which does not comply with these conditions, there is no husband or wife, no wedlock or marriage, no dower. Accordingly the children born of such a union are not in the father's power, but are in the same position as children born of a promiscuous union, who are considered to have no father, the paternity being uncertain. It follows that on the dissolution of such a union, there can be no question of claiming the return of dower. Persons who contract unlawful unions incur the penalties set forth in the imperial constitutions.

§ 95. 13. It sometimes happens that children are not in the power of parents from the very moment of birth, but are brought into power afterwards. Such is the case of a natural-born child who afterwards comes under the father's power by being made a member of a municipal council; or when the issue of a free woman, whom the father might have married, but with whom he was merely cohabiting, is afterwards in terms of our constitution brought into the father's

power by a formal marriage settlement; our constitution<sup>52</sup> assures the same status to children subsequently born of the marriage.

## TITLE XI

### *Of adoptions*

We have in our power not only natural-born children as above described, but also adopted children.

1. Adoption takes place in one of two ways, either by imperial rescript or by order of the magistrate. By the authority of the Emperor we adopt persons of either sex who are *suī juris*. This kind of adoption is called *adrogation*. By order of the magistrate we adopt persons of either sex who are in the power of parents, whether in the first degree of descent, as a son or a daughter, or in remoter degrees of descent, as a grandchild, or a great-grandchild. 2. But today by our constitution,<sup>53</sup> when a child in power is given in adoption by a natural father to an extraneous person, the rights of the natural father remain unimpaired, and nothing passes to the adoptive father, nor is the adopted child in his power, the only effect of the adoption being that we allow the adopted child the right of succeeding *ab intestato* to the adoptive father. But if the natural father has given his son in adoption not to a stranger, but to the son's maternal grandfather, or, if the natural father has been emancipated, even to the son's paternal grandfather, or, similarly, to a maternal or paternal great-grandfather:—in any such case, since the rights of natural kinship and of adoption meet in the same person, the ancient right of an adopting father remains unimpaired and the child passes into his family and power. 3. When a child below puberty is *adrogated* by imperial rescript, *adrogation* is only allowed after inquiry into the circumstances. The *adrogation* must be shown to be honourable and for the pupil's advantage and is subject to certain conditions; namely, the *adrogator* must give security to a public officer or notary, that if the child dies before reaching puberty, he will restore the property to the persons who would have succeeded if the adoption had not taken place. Further, the *adrogator* may not emancipate the child, unless after inquiry he is found to deserve to be emancipated, and then he is to restore to him his property. If the adopting father has disinherited the child, or in his lifetime emancipated him without just cause, he is ordered to leave to him one fourth of his own estate, that is to say over and above what the adopted child brought to the adopting father on adoption or has subsequently acquired for him. 4. It is settled that a younger person cannot adopt a person older than himself; for adoption imitates nature, and it would be outrageous that a son should be older than his father. It is necessary therefore that a person who *adrogates* or adopts another should be his elder by the complete term of puberty, that is by eighteen years. 5. A man may adopt a child as a grandchild, great-grandchild or remoter descendant,

<sup>52</sup> Cod. 5. 27. 10 and 11.

<sup>53</sup> Cod. 8. 47 (48). 10.

although he has no son. 6. He may adopt another man's son to be his grandson or another man's grandson to be his son. 7. But, if a person adopts a child to be his grandson as if born of an adoptive or natural son, the son must consent, so that he may not acquire a *sus heres* against his will. If a grandfather gives in adoption his son's son, his son's consent is not required. 8. In very many respects a son adopted or adrogated is assimilated to a son born in lawful wedlock. Therefore, if a person has been adrogated by imperial decree or adopted by an ascendant before the praetor or the governor of a province, he may be given in adoption by the adoptive father. 9. It is common to both kinds of adoption that persons naturally impotent may adopt, but not persons who have been castrated. 10. Women cannot adopt, because even their natural children are not in their power; but by the imperial clemency they are allowed to adopt as a solace for the loss of natural children.

§ 101.

11. A consequence peculiar to adoption by imperial rescript is that if the person adrogated has sons in his power not only does he pass into the power of the adrogator himself, but his children do so too as grandchildren of the adrogator. This was the reason why the Emperor Augustus did not adopt Tiberius until Tiberius had adopted Germanicus, so that immediately on the adoption of Tiberius Germanicus became the grandson of Augustus.

12. The old writers record an opinion happily expressed by Cato in his writings that slaves who are adopted by their masters may in this way obtain their freedom. In accordance with this we have in our wisdom enacted that if a master has by deed before the magistrate declared a slave to be his son the slave is thereby set free, though this has not the effect of giving him the rights of a son.

## TITLE XII

### *How patria potestas comes to an end*

§ 109.

Let us now see in what ways persons are freed from another's power. How slaves are freed from power may be understood from what has been said above concerning the manumission of slaves. Persons in the power of a parent become *sui juris* on his death. But a distinction must be made. When a father dies, sons and daughters [who were in his power] always become *sui juris*. But when a grandfather dies, the grandchildren do not necessarily become *sui juris*, but only if they do not fall into the power of their father. Therefore, if when the grandfather dies the father is living and in his father's power, the children fall into their father's power; but if when the grandfather dies the father is already dead, or is no longer in his father's power, his children, since they cannot fall into his power, become *sui juris*.

1. Since a man who is deported to an island for some crime loses his citizenship, it follows that when, in this way, he is removed from the number of citizens, his children cease to be in his power just as if he were dead. Similarly, if a *filiusfamilias* is deported to an island, he ceases to be in the power of his parent. If they are re-established

by imperial clemency, they recover in all respects their former status.

2. But a father who is relegated to an island retains his children in his power, and conversely a child who is relegated remains in the power of his parent.<sup>54</sup>

3. If a man becomes a slave of punishment he ceases to have his sons in his power. Slaves of punishment are those who are condemned to labour in the mines or given over to wild beasts.

4. If a *filiusfamilias* is a soldier, or becomes a senator, or a consul, he remains in power; for military service or the consular dignity does not free a son from the power of his father. But our constitution<sup>55</sup> provides that the pre-eminent rank of patrician releases a son from paternal power from the very moment of the granting of the imperial patent. For how can it be tolerated that a father should be able to release a son from the bonds of power by way of emancipation, but that the imperial majesty should not be able to take out of the power of another the man whom the Emperor has chosen to be a father of the State?

5. If a father is taken captive, though he becomes the slave of his captors, none the less his power over his children continues to exist owing to the right of *postliminium*; because persons taken captive by the enemy, if they return from captivity, recover all their former rights. Accordingly, if he comes back he will have his children in his power, because the effect of *postliminium* is that the person who was taken captive is feigned never to have left the State; but if he dies in captivity the son is deemed to have been *sui juris* from the time when his father was taken captive. Similarly, if it is a son or a grandson who is taken captive we speak of the paternal power as in suspense. The word *postliminium* is derived from "post" and "limen", and a person who is taken captive and comes back within the limits of the Empire is correctly described as returning by *postliminium*. By "limen" (threshold) we mean the frontier of a house, and the old lawyers applied the word to the frontier of the Roman State; so that the word *postliminium* conveys the idea of re-crossing the frontier. If a prisoner is recovered from a beaten foe he is deemed to have come back by *postliminium*.

6. Again, children are released from paternal power by emancipation. Formerly, this was effected either by an ancient ceremonial of pretended sales with *manumissions* interposed or by imperial rescript. But we have put an end to the old fictions and provided that parents should go directly to the competent judges or magistrates and in their presence release from their power their child or grandchild.<sup>56</sup>

After this, as provided by the praetor's edict, the emancipating parent has the same rights in respect of the property of the emancipated child or grandchild as a patron has in respect of the property of a freedman; and further, if the emancipated child is below puberty, the emancipating parent becomes his guardian.

7. It is to be noticed that an ascendant who has a son in power and also a grandchild by that son, may eman-

<sup>54</sup> Relegation was a less serious punishment than deportation. There is the well-known case of the poet Ovid, relegated to Tomi in Scythia.

<sup>55</sup> Cod. 12. 3. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Cod. 8. 48. 6.



cipate the son, retaining the grandchild in power, or, conversely, retain the son in power, emancipating the grandchildren (or any further descendants), or make all of them sui juris.

§ 105.

8. But if a father gives a son in adoption to the son's natural grandfather or great-grandfather in the way provided by our constitutions,<sup>57</sup> that is to say, declares his purpose by a formal instrument before the competent judge, both the person who is being adopted and the person who is adopting being present and offering no objection, then the power of the natural father is determined and goes over to the adopting ascendant, and, as we have observed above, the adoption retains all its old effect. 9. It must be noted that if your daughter-in-law has conceived by your son, and afterwards you emancipate your son or give him in adoption while your daughter-in-law is pregnant, none the less the child is born in your power. But if the child is conceived after the father has been emancipated or given in adoption, it will be in the power (as the case may be) of its own emancipated father or of the adoptive grandfather. There is scarcely any way in which natural or adoptive children can compel the parent to release them from his power.

§ 110.

## TITLE XVI

### *Of capitis deminutio*

§ 111. Capitis deminutio is a change of status, and takes place in three ways, for it is either maxima or minor (or as some say media) or minima.

1. Capitis deminutio maxima, that is the greatest capitis deminutio, occurs when a person loses at once citizenship and freedom. This happens when men by a terrible sentence are made slaves of punishment, or when freedmen who have shown themselves ungrateful to their patrons are reduced to slavery, or when men have suffered themselves to be sold as slaves in order to share the price.

§ 61.

2. Capitis deminutio minor vel media, that is the less or middle capitis deminutio, takes place when citizenship is lost, but freedom is retained. This happens when a man is interdicted from water and fire or deported to an island.

3. Capitis deminutio minima, that is the least capitis deminutio, takes place when citizenship and freedom are retained, but a man's status is changed. This happens when persons who were sui juris become alieni juris, or conversely.

4. There is no capitis deminutio when a slave is manumitted. for a slave has no caput to be lost or changed.

5. If a man suffers a change not of status but of social standing, he does not incur a capitis deminutio, for example by being removed from the Senate.

6. When it was said that rights of cognation continue even after capitis deminutio, this must be understood to refer to capitis deminutio minima. For, if the greatest capitis deminutio is incurred,

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<sup>57</sup> Cod. 8. 47 (48). 11.

this destroys the right of cognation as well, as for example if a cognate becomes a slave, and even if he is subsequently manumitted, the relationship is not re-established. The same consequence follows if a person is deported to an island. 7. When tutelage devolves upon agnates it does not go to all of them simultaneously, but to those who are nearest in degree, and within that degree to all.<sup>58</sup>

### III. THE THIRD DIVISION OF PERSONS

(Some independent persons have a tutor or curator, others not).

114. We pass to the third and last division of persons, namely, of persons *sui juris* some have guardians, others not. The Roman Law knew two kinds of guardianship distinguished as *tutela* and *curatio* or *cura*. We shall consider these severally. 1. 13 pr.

115. *TUTELA*.—Servius quoted by Justinian defines *tutela* as “a right and power exercised over a free person [that is, a person *sui juris*] who on account of tender years cannot take care of himself, given and allowed by civil law”. The Servius mentioned was Servius Sulpicius, consul B.C. 51 and author of the first commentary on the Edict (§ 14). No doubt, what he wrote was “on account of tender years or sex”, for in his day women who were *sui juris* were in perpetual tutelage (*perpetua mulierum tutela*). This institution in a very attenuated form still existed in the time of Gaius, but had gone out of use a century or more before Justinian.<sup>59</sup> We return to the subject later (§ 125). 1. 13. 1.

*Tutela* came into existence in various ways and the resulting kinds are distinguished as follows:—

116. (1) Testamentary (*tutela testamentaria*). A paterfamilias might by his will appoint a tutor to sons or other descendants in power who would become *sui juris* on his death (not to grandsons therefore unless their father was dead or emancipated). 1. 13. 3.

117. (2) Statutory (*legitima*). Failing a testamentary tutor the tutelage by the Law of the Twelve Tables went to the nearest agnates; for the principle was that the persons who had the benefit of succession *ab intestato* should also have the right (or burden) of tutelage. This was the statutory guardianship of agnates (*legitima agnatorum tutela*). For agnates by Nov. 118 Justinian substituted cognates. 1. 15 pr.

<sup>58</sup> If the nearest refused or were disqualified (contrary to what was the case in succession) the *tutela* went to the next in degree. Inst. 3. 2. 7.

<sup>59</sup> G. 1. 144 *sequ.*; 157; 168 *sequ.*; 190; Ulp. XI. 25; 27; Buckl. T. p. 165 ff.; M. p. 101 ff.

1. 17. There were two other cases of statutory tutelage, namely of patrons (*legitima patronorum tutela*) and of parents (*legitima parentum tutela*). The first of these was exercised by patrons and their children over persons of either sex manumitted from slavery while still under age. This was not expressly enacted by the Law of the Twelve Tables, but was an inference drawn from the fact that the law called patrons and their children to the succession *ab intestato*.<sup>60</sup> A parent, who emancipated his child under age stood to him in the position of patron,<sup>61</sup> because in the last stage of the proceedings the child was in mancipio to his father.
1. 18.

118. (3) Fiduciary (*tutela fiduciaria*). It might, however, happen that the child had not been re-mancipated to the father, and was manumitted by the person in whose mancipium he was after the third sale.<sup>62</sup> By the manumission he became quasi-patron of the manumitted child, but this tutelage was fiduciary, not legitima, because it was usual to bind the extraneous manumissor, as he was called, by a *fiducia* to hold the right of succession in trust for the emancipating father. It is not at first sight obvious what motive a parent would have for emancipating a child of tender years. It may be supposed that he, or someone else, perhaps the mother, wished to anticipate his death by making a provision for the child which would not be absorbed in the parent's estate. If through failing health or for some other reason he did not care to undertake the burden of tutelage he would allow the fictitious purchaser to manumit after the third mancipation, and thus become the child's guardian. In other words, the emancipating parent procured by act *inter vivos* the situation which would have arisen if by his will he had instituted the child as heir and appointed the extraneous person testamentary guardian. This type of tutelage did not survive the ancient form of emancipation, which Justinian abolished by a constitution of 531.<sup>63</sup> But the term fiduciary tutelage had another meaning, which is noticed by Gaius,<sup>64</sup> and is the only meaning given to it by Justinian. If the emancipating parent died leaving the emancipated child still under age the guardianship passed to the nearest male relatives of the child agnatically related to the deceased; namely the child's father (if a grandfather had emancipated), unemancipated brothers, uncles. They were called fiduciary because they had to be
3. 2. 8.

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<sup>60</sup> G. 1. 165; Inst. 1. 17.

<sup>61</sup> G. 1. 175; Inst. 1. 18.

<sup>62</sup> G. 1. 166a.

<sup>63</sup> Cod. 8. 48. 6.

<sup>64</sup> G. 1. 175; Inst. 1. 19.

called something, and, at least, the train of events which resulted in their becoming guardians began with a fiduciary mancipation. They were not statutory, for unlike the children of the patronus<sup>65</sup> they were not called to the succession by the Law of the Twelve Tables, and by inference to the guardianship. To treat the emancipating parent as a tutor legitimus was a concession which the law was not inclined to extend to his children.

119. (4) Dative (*tutela dativa*). In default of other tutors an appointment was made by the magistrate. The tutor so appointed was called tutor dativus (though for Gaius a tutor dativus was a tutor appointed by will),<sup>66</sup> and in the older law tutor Atilianus, because made at Rome under the provisions of a *lex Atilia* (before B.C. 186). A mother could not, properly speaking, appoint a tutor by will, because she had no potestas over her children, but she could leave property and appoint a tutor to manage it.<sup>67</sup> The same course was open to any person who left property by will to a child under the age of puberty. Such tutors, appointed rather to the property than to the person, required confirmation by the magistrate.<sup>68</sup> They are known in modern systems of law as "tutors nominate". 1. 20 pr.

120. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF TUTORS.—Besides providing for the education of his ward (*pupillus*),<sup>69</sup> a tutor's functions were mainly two:—1. to interpose his authority (*auctoritatem interponere*); 2. to administer the property (*negotia gerere*).<sup>70</sup> Under the first head the tutor supplemented his ward's want of capacity and enabled him to contract in his own name. It was a principle of law that the ward could not incur liability without his tutor's authority. Without it he might make his condition better (as by stipulating (§ 430) or accepting a gift), but not make it worse. Therefore, unaided, he could not accept an inheritance (which from its nature involved, or might involve, burdens as well as benefits), nor alienate property, nor bind himself by a contract involving reciprocal rights and duties, though the other party was bound to him. Of course he could not demand performance by the other party unless he was himself prepared to do his part (§ 532). The idea of authority is that the tutor 1. 21 pr. 2. §. 2.

<sup>65</sup> G. 3. 58.

<sup>66</sup> G. 1. 154.

<sup>67</sup> Dig. 26. 2. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Dig. 26. 3. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Dig. 26. 7. 12, 3: *cum tutor non rebus dumtaxat, sed etiam moribus pupilli praeponatur.*

<sup>70</sup> Ulp. XI. 25.

1. 21. 2 augments or completes the deficient capacity of his ward. The authority must be given by the tutor in person at the time of the act to be authorised. If given by letter or after an interval it was ineffectual. It was something more than a mere consent.

121. The other principal function of the tutor was *negotia gerere*, that is to administer the property as trustee for his ward. Each function had its special inconvenience.<sup>71</sup> *Auctoritatis interpositio* was only possible when the ward was old enough to know what he was doing. He must have *intellectus*. The tutor could only supply *judicium*. Further, it required the co-operation of guardian and of ward. The disadvantage of *negotiorum gestio* was that whatever the tutor did was done in his own name. It bound and entitled him and not the ward. Modern systems get over the difficulty by making the guardian the representative of the ward (§ 130 ix). Roman Law with its imperfect theory of agency went only a little way in this direction. But it partly attained the same result when under the Empire it gave equitable actions (*utiles actiones*) after the determination of the guardianship to and against the late ward in respect of the late guardian's administration, the late guardian having no further right or liability in relation to third parties.<sup>72</sup>

1. 25 122. In the early law a testamentary tutor might decline to act. But in the time of Justinian *tutela* was a public duty which might not be declined except by leave of the magistrate. Numerous grounds of excuse were admitted. A whole Title of the Institutes is devoted to the subject.

123. Under the Empire the powers of a tutor were much restricted. First, the *Oratio Severi* of A.D. 195 forbade the alienation of *praedia rustica* and *suburbana*—agricultural land and undeveloped building land—except in certain cases, without an order of Court,<sup>73</sup> and Constantine extended this to *praedia urbana*—houses—and to valuable movables.<sup>74</sup> The result was that in the later law the tutor's power of alienation without leave of Court was very limited.

124. The law had many contrivances to protect wards against maladministration and misconduct of guardians. The fact that so many precautions were taken shows that they were needed. Thus :—1. It was open to any person other than the ward<sup>75</sup> to take proceedings for the removal of a tutor on

<sup>71</sup> Girard, p. 229.

<sup>72</sup> Dig. 26. 9; Cod. 5. 39.

<sup>73</sup> Dig. 27. 9. 1.

<sup>74</sup> Cod. 5. 37. 22.

<sup>75</sup> Dig. 26. 10. 7 pr.

the ground of misconduct, actual or anticipated (*accusatio* or *crimen suspecti tutoris*). This action had its origin in the Twelve Tables. 2. The (late) ward after the termination of the tutorship<sup>76</sup> (or his heirs) had the *actio rationibus distrahendis* (action for liquidation of accounts). It lay for double damages against a tutor who had been guilty of embezzlement.<sup>77</sup> This also dated from the Twelve Tables. It is surmised that originally the first of these remedies lay against the testamentary tutor alone, the second against the tutor legitimus alone, but in Justinian's law either remedy was available against any guardians. 3. A more general remedy was the *actio tutelae* dating from the later Republic.<sup>78</sup> It lay like the *actio negotiorum gestorum* (§ 574) in respect of an administration which had actually taken place, and was therefore brought only after the guardianship was at an end. Later, it assumed a more general character and could be brought in respect of any dereliction of duty. The standard of diligence demanded of a tutor is variously stated in the Digest. For Justinian it seems to be the *diligentia quam suis rebus* (§ 403). Perhaps he made it so.<sup>79</sup> Condemnation in this action (*actio tutelae directa*) entailed infamia. The ex-guardian on his side had a contrary action (*actio tutelae contraria*) for expenses and indemnity. 1. 26. 4 16. 2.

4. Guardians were sometimes required to furnish security for their faithful administration (*satisfactio rem pupilli salvam fore*). This applied to all *tutores legitimi* and to tutors appointed by the magistrate without previous inquiry in the case of small estates. If the estate was large the matter came before a higher magistrate, who, before making an appointment, satisfied himself as to the sufficiency of the proposed tutor. In this case no security was required, nor was it demanded of testamentary tutors, whom the testator himself had selected for the office. If, in a case requiring security, the magistrate had failed to take any, or sufficient, security, he exposed himself to a subsidiary action for consequential damage. 1. 24. 1. 24. 2.

5. Lastly, the tutor had to make an inventory of the pupil's estate and his own property was subject to a general tacit hypothec to secure the pupil's claims (§ 249). This was introduced by Constantine and retained by Justinian.<sup>80</sup> § 242.

<sup>76</sup> Dig. 27. 3. 1, 24.

<sup>77</sup> Dig. 27. 3. 2.

<sup>78</sup> Q. Mucius Scaevola mentions the *actio tutelae* in an enumeration of the *judicia bonae fidei*. (§ 654.) Cic. *de Offic.* 3. 17. 70.

<sup>79</sup> Dig. 27. 3. 1 pr. (interpolated?).

<sup>80</sup> Cod. 1. 37. 20.

125. *PERPETUA TUTELA MULIERUM.*—Reference has been made above to the perpetual tutelage of women. This was an institution for which parallels are found in other systems of law ancient and modern. The principal design was to keep the property in the family. The reason commonly given that women owing to the levity of their minds are easily imposed upon seemed to Gaius more specious than real.<sup>81</sup> In his time the institution was already in decay. The Law of the Twelve Tables had exempted Vestal Virgins from its operation. The *leges Julia* and *Papia Poppaea* of Augustus freed from tutelage married women who had acquired the *jus liberorum* by having three children if *ingenuae*, four if *libertinae*.<sup>82</sup> Claudius (A.D. 49?) abolished the agnatic tutelage of women.<sup>83</sup> Consequently even young girls could not have agnatic tutors while young boys could. This anomaly was removed by Constantine.<sup>84</sup> The statutory tutelage of patrons and parents remained and was to some extent a reality.

“No doubt the statutory guardianships of patrons and of parents are understood to have some effect, because these guardians are not compelled to authorise their female wards to make a testament or to alienate *res mancipi* or to contract an obligation, unless there is a very good reason for the alienation or the obligation. All this is established in the interest of the guardians in order that their right as intestate heirs may not be excluded by the woman's will, or the amount of the inheritance reduced by the alienation of valuable property or by a burden of debt.”<sup>85</sup>

The statutory guardians of women were allowed to get rid of the burden of guardianship by making a cession in Court (*cessio in jure*, § 153) to another person called the *cessicius tutor*.<sup>86</sup>

The other guardianships—testamentary, fiduciary, dative—were a mere formality.

“For women of full age manage their own affairs and in some cases the guardian interposes his authority as a matter of form, and often the praetor compels him to do so against his will.”<sup>87</sup>

If a woman wished to change her tutor she could do so with the authority of her existing tutor by the process described above in speaking of *manus* (§ 112).

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<sup>81</sup> G. I. 190.

<sup>82</sup> G. I. 145, 194.

<sup>83</sup> G. I. 157.

<sup>84</sup> Cod. 5. 30. 3.

<sup>85</sup> G. I. 192.

<sup>86</sup> G. I. 168, 169.

<sup>87</sup> G. I. 190.

The *jus liberorum* was sometimes conferred by imperial favour on women who had not the necessary qualification. Augustus conferred it on his wife Livia. A final blow was perhaps dealt to the perpetual tutelage of women, if in fact it had existed so long, by a constitution of Honorius and Theodosius A.D. 410, which adopted the curious expedient of giving all women the *jus liberorum*.<sup>88</sup> *Nemo post haec a nobis jus liberorum petat, quod simul hac lege omnibus concedimus.*<sup>89</sup> But there is some doubt as to the effect of the original enactment (the words quoted are from Justinian's Code). Perhaps it is safer to say that the institution became obsolete by disuse.

126. *CURA—CURATIO* (curatorship).—Obviously boys of fourteen and girls of twelve cannot be left to manage their own affairs. Accordingly, curatorship succeeds to tutelage. This institution is commonly supposed to have its origin in a *lex Plaetoria* of about B.C. 200, which punished persons who overreached anyone under twenty-five years of age (*minores viginti quinque annis-adolescentes*). Apart from the penalty, the nature of which is unknown, the praetor allowed the minor to plead the *lex* by way of *exceptio* to an action brought upon the impeached transaction (§ 726). It became usual for a person who wished to do business with a minor to require the minor to apply, or himself to apply, to the magistrate to appoint a curator for the purpose of the transaction in question.<sup>90</sup> At a later date the Emperor Marcus Aurelius initiated the practice of allowing a minor to get a permanent curator appointed for the general management of his affairs. Curators differed from tutors mainly in the following particulars: 1. They were appointed to administer the property, not to control the person; 2, no one was obliged to have a curator unless he was a party to litigation and in some other cases, for example, a retiring tutor might demand the appointment of a curator for the purpose of settling accounts; 3, a curator could not, strictly speaking, be appointed by will, but, if so appointed, was generally confirmed by the magistrate.

127. Up to about the time of Diocletian a minor was free to contract, with the qualification that if the contract was calculated to prejudice him he might obtain *restitutio in integrum* (§ 758) from the praetor, and this was so whether he acted with or without the consent of a curator,<sup>91</sup> though

<sup>88</sup> Cod. Theod. 8. 17. 3.

<sup>89</sup> Cod. 8. 58 (59).

<sup>90</sup> Cod. 5. 31. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Dig. 45. 1. 101. (Modestinus).



in the first case relief, obviously, would less easily be accorded. In the later law minors who had permanent curators came to be assimilated more and more closely to pupils and had in general the same liabilities, rights and remedies.<sup>92</sup> In consequence, just as the pupil could not bind himself without the authority of his tutor, so the minor could not incur more than a natural obligation without the consent of his curator.<sup>93</sup> Consent was not the same as authority. It might be indicated in any way. The curator need not be present at the transaction. Ratification had the same effect as antecedent consent. If the minor had no curator—as we have seen he need not have one—the old law continued to apply. Consent was not the only function of the curator. He came to have, like the tutor, a general power of administration. In the case of a female between the ages of twelve and twenty-five, the tutor, if there was one, had no power to administer,<sup>94</sup> so that, though she had a tutor, she would need a curator as well.<sup>95</sup> Under the Empire the normal term of full age (twenty-five years—*perfecta aetas*) was occasionally anticipated by special imperial licence. This privilege was accorded to young men who had completed their twentieth, and to young women who had completed their eighteenth, year.<sup>96</sup> It carried all the usual rights of majority except that, like minors generally, they could not alienate or hypothecate immovable property without a decree of Court.<sup>97</sup> It might be convenient that a young man who had not reached full age should take over the administration of his dead father's affairs. In the case of a woman it may be supposed that the object usually was to release her from curatorship on marriage. This institution, known as *venia aetatis*, has been adopted with variations by many modern systems of law.<sup>98</sup>

1. 23. 3. 128. Another and much older case of curatorship was that exercised over insane persons and prodigals. By the Law of the Twelve Tables madmen (*furiosi*) and prodigals interdicted from the management of their goods were placed under the curatorship of their agnates. This provision was of limited scope. It did not apply to any case of mental disorder short of madness, nor to prodigal freedmen (who had no agnates) nor to prodigal

<sup>92</sup> Girard, p. 252; Buckl. *M.* p. 106.

<sup>93</sup> Cod. 2. 21. 3 (Diocletian and Maximian, A.D. 293).

<sup>94</sup> G. 1. 190; Ulp. XI. 25.

<sup>95</sup> *Vat.* 110; Dig. 26. 5. 13. 2.

<sup>96</sup> Cod. 2. 44. 2.

<sup>97</sup> Cod. 2. 44. 3.

<sup>98</sup> *B. G. B. art. 3*; Swiss *C. C. art. 15*; and in South Africa and Ceylon, Lee, p. 44.

ingenui unless they were dissipating property which came to them *ab intestato* from a father or grandfather.<sup>99</sup> All these *lacunae* the praetor supplied by appointing curators to meet the special emergency in question, and ultimately the curatorship of the agnates fell into disuse, the praetor assuming a general jurisdiction to deal with all cases of mental disease or prodigality.

### THE INSTITUTES

#### BOOK I (Tits. XIII—XV, XVII—XXVI)

##### TITLE XIII

##### *Of tutelage*

Let us pass now to another division. Of persons *sui juris* some § 114.  
have tutors or curators, others not. We will consider, then, who have tutors or curators, for in this way it will be evident who are not subject to any such control; and let us begin with tutors. 1. Tutelage, as Servius defined it, is a right and power exercised over an independent person, given and allowed by the civil law for the protection of one who on account of his tender age is not able § 115.  
to be his own defender. 2. The persons who exercise this right and power are called tutors (from *tueri* = to defend). 3. Parents are allowed to give tutors by will to children in power who have not yet § 116.  
reached puberty; but to grandchildren only if on the grandparent's death they will not come under the power of their own father. Consequently, if at the time of your death your son is in your power, his children cannot have a tutor under your will, although they were in your power, because on your death they will fall into the power of their father. 4. Since posthumous children are for many purposes deemed to be already born, it is settled that tutors may be given by will to posthumous children no less than to children already born, provided that if they were born in the testator's lifetime they would be in his power and prospective *sui heredes*. 5. If a father appoints a tutor by will to an emancipated son, the appointment requires confirmation by the governor<sup>100</sup> which is given as of course without inquiry.

##### TITLE XIV

##### *Who may be appointed tutors by will*

Not only a *paterfamilias*, but also a *filiusfamilias* may be § 116.  
appointed tutor. 1. A testator may even appoint his slave, giving him at the same time his freedom, or even without doing so, for the appointment as tutor tacitly implies a direct gift of freedom.

<sup>99</sup> Ulp. XII, 3.

<sup>100</sup> *i.e.*, in the provinces, at Rome by the appropriate magistrate (*infra*, 1. 20. 4.).

Of course, it is another matter if a slave supposed to be free is appointed by mistake. Another man's slave cannot be appointed unconditionally, but an appointment expressed to take effect "when he shall be free" is good. A man cannot appoint his own slave on such terms. 2. If a madman or a person less than twenty-five years of age is appointed, the appointment will take effect when he recovers his sanity or reaches the age of five and twenty.

§ 277. 3. A tutor may unquestionably be appointed until a certain time, or from a certain time, or before the institution of an heir.<sup>1</sup> 4. But a tutor cannot be appointed for a certain property or for a certain purpose, for tutors are appointed to the person and not for a special purpose or thing.

5. If a testator has appointed tutors to his "daughters" or "sons", he is understood to appoint to a daughter or son born posthumously. What is to be said of grandchildren? Are they to be understood to be included under the description "sons"? The answer is that if the testator said "children", they are included, but not if he said "sons", for there is a distinction between the words "son" and "grandson". The expression "after-born children" clearly includes sons and other descendants.

## TITLE XV

### *Of the statutory tutelage of agnates*

§ 117. If no tutor has been appointed by will, by the Law of the Twelve Tables the agnates are tutors. They are termed statutory tutors. 1. By a man's agnates are meant persons related to him through males, for example a brother born of the same father, such brother's son, a grandson by such son, a father's brother, a father's brother's son, a grandson by such son. But persons related through females are not agnates, but cognates, that is, connected by a natural tie of relationship. Therefore, your father's sister's son is not your agnate, but your cognate, and conversely you are his cognate, because children belong to the father's, not to the mother's family. 2. When the law calls the agnates to the succession in the event of intestacy this does not necessarily imply that the deceased made no will at all; it means if he died intestate so far as concerns the appointment of a tutor. This would be the case also if the tutor appointed in the testator's will had died in his lifetime. 3. Rights founded on agnation are almost always<sup>2</sup> destroyed by *capitis deminutio*; for agnation is an institution of the civil law. But rights of cognation are not always affected,<sup>3</sup> because civil law principles may destroy civil law rights, but certainly not natural rights.

<sup>1</sup> G. 2. 231; Inst. 2. 20. 34.

<sup>2</sup> There were exceptions in the later Empire, e.g., Anastasius allowed emancipated brothers and sisters to succeed as if they had not been emancipated. *Infra*, 3. 5. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Inst. 1. 16. 6.

## TITLE XVII

*Of the statutory tutelage of patrons*

By the same Law of the Twelve Tables the tutelage of freed persons § 117. of either sex belongs to their patrons and the patrons' children. This too is called statutory, not that the law has any express provision with regard to it, but this consequence has been drawn from the law by interpretation. For, from the fact that the law directed that the inheritances of freedmen and freedwomen who died intestate should go to the patrons and their children, the old lawyers concluded that the law intended that the tutelage also should belong to them, since it directed that the agnates whom it called to the succession should also be tutors, and because, in general, the benefit of succession and the burden of tutelage go together. We say "in general" because if a child is manumitted under the age of puberty by a woman, the woman is called to the succession, but some other person is tutor.

## TITLE XVIII

*Of the statutory tutelage of parents*

On the analogy of the tutelage of patrons another tutelage is § 117. admitted which is also called statutory. For, if a parent has emancipated a son or daughter, a grandson or granddaughter by a son or further descendants, below the age of puberty, he will be their statutory tutor.

## TITLE XIX

*Of fiduciary tutelage*

There is another tutelage which is called fiduciary. For, if a § 118. parent has manumitted a son or a daughter, a grandson or a granddaughter or a further descendant under puberty, he becomes their statutory tutor; but when he dies, if he has male children, they become fiduciary tutors of their sons or brother or sister and so forth. Yet if a patron tutor dies, his children succeed him as statutory tutors, because a son of the deceased, if he had not been emancipated in his father's lifetime, after his death would be *sui juris* and would not fall into the power of his brothers or have them for tutors; but a freedman, if he had remained a slave would, of course, have been in the same position in relation to his master's children after his master's death.<sup>4</sup> The persons above-mentioned are only qualified to be fiduciary tutors if they are of full age; this rule has by our constitution<sup>5</sup> been extended to all tutors and curators.

## TITLE XX

*Of the tutor Atilianus and the tutor appointed under the lex Julia et Titia*

If a child has no other tutor of any kind a tutor used to be § 119. appointed in Rome under the provisions of the *lex Atilia* by the urban

<sup>4</sup> See remarks in Buckl. *T.* p. 147; *M.* p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Cod. 5. 30. 5.

praetor and the majority of the tribunes of the people, and in the provinces as provided by the *lex Julia et Titia* by the governor of the province. 1. Further, if a tutor was appointed by testament subject to a condition, or from a certain date, a substitute might be appointed under the same statutes to act while the condition was pending, or until the day arrived. Again, if the testamentary appointment was unconditional, application might be made under these laws for the appointment of a tutor to act pending the acceptance of the inheritance. A tutor so appointed ceased to be tutor on the occurrence of the contemplated event. 2. If a tutor was taken captive by the enemy a tutor substitute might be appointed under these laws, who ceased to be tutor when the captive returned, for on his return he was re-instated as tutor by the rule of *postliminium*. 3. However, appointments ceased to be made under these statutes from the time when the consuls began to appoint tutors to pupils of either sex after inquiry, and, later, imperial constitutions empowered the praetors to appoint; for the above-mentioned statutes made no provision for taking security from tutors, nor for compelling tutors to undertake the duty of administration. 4. The practice now is that at Rome appointments are made by the praefect of the city or the praetor, each within the limits of his jurisdiction, and in the provinces by the governors after inquiry, or by magistrates to whom the matter is referred by the governors, if the pupil's estate is of no great value. 5. Our constitution,<sup>6</sup> dispensing with the governor's order, provides that if the estate of a pupil or a minor amounts to five hundred aurei the Defenders of the Cities together with the Bishop of the City or other officials, or the magistrates or the Justice of the City of Alexandria shall appoint tutors or curators, a statutory security to be given as provided by the same constitution and the magistrates accepting it to be responsible for its adequacy. 6. The institution of tutelage, is in accordance with the law of nature, which places children of tender years under the direction and guardianship of others. 7. Since tutors manage the affairs of their pupils, when they reach the age of puberty the tutors may be required to account in an action of tutelage (*actio tutelae*).

§ 124.

## TITLE XXI

### *Of the authority of tutors*

§ 120.

In some cases pupils require the authority of tutors, in others not. For example, if a pupil stipulates for something to be given to him, the tutor's authority is not necessary, but it is, if a pupil makes a promise to another person. For it is a settled principle that a pupil may make his condition better even without the tutor's authority, but cannot make it worse without such authority. Consequently in contracts which give rise to reciprocal obligations, such as purchase and sale, hire, mandate, deposit, if the tutor does not give his authority, the other party to the contract is bound, but

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<sup>6</sup> Cod. 1. 4. 30.

the pupil is not bound. 1. Further a pupil cannot accept an inheritance, or petition for possession of goods, or take up a fideicommissary inheritance except with the tutor's authority, even if the estate is profitable and does not entail any loss. 2. The tutor must be present to give his authority at the time of the actual transaction, if he thinks it for the pupil's advantage that he should do so. Authority given after the transaction or by letter is of no effect. 3. If an action is pending between a tutor and a pupil, since the tutor cannot give authority in a matter which affects his own interest, it is no longer the practice, as it once was, to appoint a praetorius tutor,<sup>7</sup> but a curator is appointed to take the place of the tutor. The action then proceeds with the intervention of the curator, whose function ceases when the action is concluded.

## TITLE XXII

### *How tutelage is determined*

Pupils of either sex are freed from tutelage when they reach puberty. In the case of males the old lawyers used to ascertain puberty not merely with reference to the child's age, but also from an examination of the body.<sup>8</sup> This was long ago repudiated as indecent in the case of females and we hold it to be equally open to objection in the case of males. Accordingly, we have promulgated a constitution<sup>9</sup> fixing the age of puberty in males at the completion of the fourteenth year. For females we retain the old rule according to which women are deemed to be of a marriageable age when they have completed their twelfth year. 1. Again, tutelage is terminated, if the child before reaching puberty is given in adrogation or deported, or reduced to slavery by a patron on account of ingratitude, or taken captive by the enemy. 2. If a tutor is appointed by will until a certain condition is realised, he ceases to be tutor when the condition takes effect. 3. Tutelage is determined by the death of tutor or pupil. 4. Again tutelage comes to an end if the tutor suffers capitis deminutio with loss of freedom or citizenship. If the tutor incurs the least capitis deminutio, as by giving himself in adoption, the statutory tutelage alone is determined, the other kinds of tutelage remaining unaffected. But any capitis deminutio of the pupil, even the least, puts an end to the tutelage. 5. Again, if a tutor is appointed by will up to a certain time, he ceases to be tutor when the time arrives. 6. Tutelage is determined if a tutor is removed on a suspicion of misconduct, or is excused for just cause and relieved of the burden of administration, as will be explained below. § 61. § 111.

## TITLE XXIII

### *Of curators*

Males who have arrived at the age of puberty and females of marriageable age have curators until they have completed their § 126.

<sup>7</sup> G. I. 184.

<sup>8</sup> G. I. 196; Ulp. XI. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Cod. 5. 60. 3.

§ 128.

twenty-fifth year, for they are not yet of an age to manage their own affairs. 1. Curators are appointed by the same magistrates as appoint tutors. A curator is not appointed by testament, but if so appointed is confirmed by an order of the praetor or governor. 2. Persons below the age of twenty-five years are not obliged to have curators except for the purposes of a law-suit<sup>10</sup>; for a curator may be appointed for a specific purpose. 3. By the Law of the Twelve Tables madmen and prodigals (though above the age of five and twenty years)<sup>11</sup> are in the curatorship of their agnates. But the modern practice is for curators to be appointed at Rome by the praefect of the city or the praetor, and in the provinces by the governors after inquiry. 4. Curators should also be appointed to persons who are of feeble mind or deaf and dumb, or suffer from an incurable disease, because they are unable to attend to their affairs. 5. There are cases in which even pupils receive curators, for instance if a statutory tutor is unfit to act, for if a person has a tutor already he cannot have another given him. Again, if a tutor appointed by testament or by the praetor or governor is not competent to administer the estate, and yet is not guilty of misconduct, the practice is to appoint a curator to act with him; and the same course is followed to supply the place of tutors who are excused not altogether, but for a limited time.

6. If a tutor suffers from ill-health, or is prevented by any other cause from attending to his pupil's affairs, and the pupil is absent or an infant,<sup>12</sup> the praetor or governor of the province will appoint the tutor's nominee to act for him, the tutor remaining responsible.

#### TITLE XXIV

##### *Of the security to be given by tutors and curators*

§ 124.

To prevent the property of pupils and of persons who have curators being dissipated or diminished, the praetor requires tutors and curators to give security for their administration. However, this is not invariably the case; for testamentary tutors are not compelled to give security, because the testator has satisfied himself as to their fidelity and capacity; and tutors and curators appointed after inquiry are not called upon to furnish security, because they are chosen for their fitness. 1. If two or more persons are appointed by testament or after inquiry, any one of them may offer to give security to indemnify the pupil or minor and so be preferred to his fellow tutor or curator and administer the estate alone, unless the co-tutor [or co-curator] is prepared to give security and to be the sole administrator. This means that a tutor or curator cannot directly compel his fellow tutor or curator to give security, but he must offer security himself, so as to give the co-tutor [or co-curator] the choice of accepting or of giving security. If no one offers to give security, the tutor chosen

<sup>10</sup> Or when a debtor wished to pay a debt, or the tutor to settle his accounts.

<sup>11</sup> i.e., without regard to age. The age in the case of the curatorship of minors resulted from the *lex Plaetoria*, which was more than two centuries later than the Twelve Tables.

<sup>12</sup> If the pupil was present and above the age of infancy he could himself appoint with the tutor's authority.

by the testator to do so must administer, and if the will contains no direction, the tutor selected by the majority must administer, as is laid down in the praetor's Edict. If the tutors cannot agree amongst themselves as to the choice of one or more administrators, the praetor must interpose. The same course is to be adopted when there are several tutors appointed after inquiry, namely, the majority may decide who is to administer. 2. It must be known that not only are tutors and curators liable to pupils, minors and others in respect of their administration, but, further, a subsidiary action is available as a last resort against the magistrates who accept the security. This may be brought against magistrates § 124. who have entirely neglected to see that tutors or curators gave security, or who have accepted an inadequate security. The responses of lawyers and imperial constitutions have extended the remedy, so as to make it available against their heirs as well. 3. The said constitutions further provide that if tutors and curators fail to give security they may be coerced by execution upon their property. 4. This action does not lie against the praefect of the city or against a praetor or governor of a province or any other person authorised to appoint tutors, but only against those magistrates whose duty it is to demand security.

## TITLE XXV

*Of the excuses of tutors or curators*

Tutors and curators are excused for various reasons, particularly on § 122. account of children, whether in power or emancipated. If they have at Rome three children surviving, in Italy four, or in the provinces five, they may be excused from tutorship or curatorship as from other public duties. for tutorship and curatorship are regarded as public duties. Adopted children are not taken into account, but a natural father may take credit for children given in adoption. Grandchildren by a son are reckoned as representing their father, but not grandchildren by a daughter. Only surviving sons are reckoned. But the question has been raised as to sons lost in war, and it is settled that only those are reckoned who fall in battle, for these, having given their lives for the State, are deemed to go on living in the annals of fame. 1. A rescript in the *Semestria* of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius decreed that an administrator of the Fisc<sup>13</sup> may be excused so long as he continues to act. 2. Absence on State business is a ground of excuse. In the case of existing tutors and curators this is allowed so long as the absence lasts, a special curator being appointed to act for them. They resume their functions on their return, and cannot claim the year's delay which is allowed in the case of new appointments. So Papinian wrote in the fifth book of his *Responsa*.

3. Office-holders are excused, as the Emperor Marcus decreed; but acceptance of office is no excuse for abandoning a guardianship already undertaken. 4. Litigation between the guardian and the pupil or minor is no excuse unless it relates to the whole property or to an inheritance. 5. Three burdens of tutorship or curatorship which the guardian has not solicited afford relief so long as the administration lasts. A guardianship exercised over several wards, such as brothers, in respect of one estate counts as one guardianship. 6. Poverty is a ground of excuse, if a person can show that he is unable to undertake the burden imposed upon him. 7. Ill-health is an excuse, if it prevents a person managing his own affairs. 8. The Emperor Pius decided by rescript that illiteracy was an excuse, though, of course, illiterate persons may be able to do business.

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<sup>13</sup> The Imperial Treasury.



9. If a testator has appointed a person testamentary tutor from ill will, this without more furnishes an excuse. A person cannot be excused, if he promised the child's father that he would act. 10. The mere fact that the person nominated as guardian was unknown to the child's father is not in itself an excuse. 11. Enmity of a serious character between a tutor or curator and the father of the ward is a ground of excuse if no reconciliation has ensued. 12. Similarly, if the father has challenged the guardian's status. 13. A person upwards of seventy years of age may claim to be excused. Formerly, it was the practice to excuse persons under twenty-five years of age, but by our constitution<sup>14</sup> they are disqualified from acting as tutors or curators, so that no excuse is needed. This enacts that neither a pupil nor a minor shall be called to a statutory tutelage; for it was inconsistent with principle that persons who require help in managing their affairs and are under guardianship themselves should be allowed to have the guardianship of others. 14. Soldiers may not be guardians, even if they are willing to act. 15. At Rome grammarians, rhetoricians and medical men are exempted from tutorship and curatorship. The same applies to those who practice these professions in their native cities and are within the permitted number.<sup>15</sup>

16. When a person wishes to be excused and alleges several grounds of excuse, if he fails to establish some of them, he is not forbidden to rely on others within the periods allowed. Those who wish to excuse themselves do not appeal, but, whatever the nature of their tutorship, make their excuses, if they are within one hundred miles from the place of their appointment, within fifty days from the time when they have knowledge of it; if they are living more than one hundred miles away, the time allowed is one day for each twenty miles and thirty days more. But, as Scævola used to say, this must be so calculated that the period is not in any case less than fifty days.

17. Every tutor is considered to be appointed to the ward's whole estate. 18. A person who has acted as tutor is not obliged to be curator for the same person. Even if a father who has appointed a person tutor by his will has added that he appoints the same person curator, such person must not be compelled to act in this capacity. This is laid down in a rescript of the Emperors Severus and Antoninus.

19. The same Emperors decided by rescript that a husband appointed curator to his wife may excuse himself, even though he is intermeddling in her affairs. 20. If a person has got himself exempted by alleging false grounds of excuse, this does not discharge him from the burden of guardianship.

#### TITLE XXVI

##### *Of tutors and curators who have come under suspicion*

#### § 124.

The *crimen suspecti* (that is, the charge brought against a suspected tutor) goes back to the Twelve Tables. 1. The right of removing suspected tutors is vested at Rome in the praetor and in the provinces in the governors and the proconsul's legate. 2. We have told who may take cognisance of a case of suspicion. Now let us see who may come under suspicion. All tutors may, whether testamentary or of any other kind, a statutory tutor included. What is to be said of a patron? He too may be removed, only we should remember that his reputation must be spared. 3. Next, we must inquire who may take proceedings against suspected tutors. It must be known

<sup>14</sup> Cod. 5. 30. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Only a limited number was allowed in each city.

that the action is reckoned to be a public action, that is anyone may bring it. Even women are allowed to do so by a rescript of the Emperors Severus and Antoninus, but only such as act from motives of affection, for example a mother; so too a nurse, a grandmother, or a sister. But if the praefor observes that any other woman moved by a sense of duty not inconsistent with the modesty proper to her sex cannot endure that a child should suffer harm he allows her to make the accusation. 4. Children below puberty cannot accuse their tutors; minors above that age may accuse their curators, acting on the advice of near relations. This was enacted by a rescript of Severus and Antoninus.

5. A tutor falls under suspicion if he does not administer his tutorship faithfully, even though he is solvent. This was Julian's opinion. The same jurist says that a tutor may be removed on the ground of suspicion before he has begun to act, and there is a constitution to this effect. 6. A tutor who has been removed for active misconduct incurs infamia, but not if removed for negligence. 7. If proceedings are taken against a tutor on the ground of suspicion, he is suspended from the administration pending the inquiry; so Papinian held. 8. Proceedings come to an end if the tutor or curator dies pending the inquiry. 9. If a tutor fails to present himself in order to get determined the allowance to be made for the pupil's maintenance, the Emperors Severus and Antoninus decreed by epistle<sup>16</sup> that the pupil is to be put into possession of the tutor's goods, and a curator is to be appointed to sell wasting property. Accordingly a tutor may be removed as suspected if he fails to provide maintenance. 10. If a tutor puts in an appearance, and falsely alleges that the pupil's estate is too small to admit of an order for maintenance being made, he is to be remitted for punishment to the praefect of the city just as is the case if a person has purchased a guardianship by bribery.

11. If a freedman is found to have been guilty of fraud in the administration of the tutelage of sons or grandsons of his patron, he is sent to the praefect of the city for punishment.

12. Lastly, it must be observed that tutors and curators who are guilty of fraud in their administration must be removed, even though they offer security, because giving security does not change the guardian's dishonest intentions, but merely affords an opportunity of continuing to rob the estate.

13. For we consider a person to be suspected when his character lays him open to suspicion. A tutor or curator who is a faithful and careful administrator is not to be removed on the ground of suspicion simply because he is poor.

#### IV. JURISTIC PERSONS

129. The subject of juristic persons—not touched upon in the Institutes—is too complicated and controversial to admit of more than a brief reference within the compass of an elementary textbook. If some texts in the Digest could be taken at their face value we might conclude that the general notion of a corporation as a legal entity distinct from its members was as familiar to the lawyers of the classical age as it was to the age of Justinian. *Si quid universitati debetur, singulis non debetur: nec quod debet universitas singuli*

<sup>16</sup> Dig. 26. 10. 7, 2.

debent. "What is owed to the corporation is not owed to the individual members, and what the corporation owes, the individual members do not owe." The quotation is from Ulpian's tenth book on the Edict.<sup>17</sup> But we cannot be sure that Ulpian meant the word "universitas" to include more than the municipal corporations, of which, as appears from the context, he was speaking. The general application of the word to every kind of corporate body may belong to a later age. In any case the process was complete by the time of Justinian. That the idea of corporate personality was only gradually established appears from the difficulty which was long experienced in admitting that a municipality or its members collectively could possess,<sup>18</sup> accept a legacy<sup>19</sup> or be instituted heir (§ 293).<sup>20</sup>

Juristic personality is sometimes attributed to foundations for pious causes. But the notion of the foundation in some mysterious way owning itself—an idea as incomprehensible to English lawyers as the trust conception is to continental lawyers—if entertained at all, was, even in the Byzantine Empire, still in embryo. Usually the property devoted to charitable purposes was conveyed to the Church or to the bishop of the diocese, for the purpose of administration. When, as sometimes happened, a trust (so to call it) was created with no indication of a trustee, the question in whom ownership vested remains an enigma.<sup>21</sup>

The view once general which attributes juristic personality to a vacant inheritance (*hereditas jacens*, § 323) no longer finds favour.<sup>22</sup> But the subject may conveniently be considered in this connection. The question of ownership pending acceptance was never entirely settled. In the early law the inheritance (later the items comprised in it) might be acquired by usucapion (so Gaius tells us) though the acquirer knew that he had no title to the property, until this dishonest institution was abolished by the Emperor Hadrian (§ 163). The fact that it was acquired by usucapion, not by occupation, implies that what was acquired was not a *res nullius*. Gaius speaks of it as a case of acquiring what one knows to belong to someone else (*accidit ut qui sciat alienam rem se possidere usucapiat*). Yet the same Gaius in the Digest says

G. 2. 52

<sup>17</sup> Dig. 3. 4. 7, 1 (Monro's translation). Duff, *Personality in Roman Private Law*, pp. 47, 48.

<sup>18</sup> Dig. 41. 2. 1, 22.

<sup>19</sup> Ulp. XXIV, 28.

<sup>20</sup> Ulp. XXII, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Buckl. T. p. 178; M. p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> Sohm, p. 513.

that things belonging to an inheritance before anyone becomes heir are no man's property (*nullius in bonis*),<sup>23</sup> and there are other texts to the same effect. For a long time the law oscillated between the view that the title of the eventual heir related back to the time when the inheritance became vacant,<sup>24</sup> and the contrary view that the inheritance represented the person of the deceased,<sup>25</sup> though, on either hypothesis, the things comprised in it were meanwhile without an owner. Then, the idea emerged that the inheritance was owner—*hereditas dominae locum obtinet* <sup>26</sup>—and this goes a long way towards recognising it as a juristic person. But it cannot be said that this conclusion was positively reached. "It seems that even the compilers did not really regard the *hereditas jacens* as a person."<sup>27</sup> If it was a person, it remained a person of limited capacity. Thus, though in general a slave belonging to an inheritance acquired for the inheritance as for any other master, the inheritance could acquire through him neither another inheritance to which he had been instituted (because until the heir entered there was no one to authorise acceptance), nor a usufruct (because there was no living person to whom the usufruct could attach).<sup>28</sup>

## APPENDIX

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE ROMAN LAW OF PERSONS UPON MODERN SYSTEMS

130. This ends what we have to say on the Roman Law of Persons. But before passing to the Law relating to Things it may be of interest to consider shortly the influence of the Roman Law of Persons on modern systems of law, so far as this has not been already noticed. Where Roman elements are present they are generally due rather to inheritance than to reception, for the Law of Persons does not readily lend itself to export and import. It is true that some institutions of Roman Law have been tardily imitated by common law systems, but in such cases (and indeed this applies generally) the use of Roman terms sometimes conceals a difference of substance. We shall speak only of some of the principal institutions described in the foregoing pages so far as they have their counterpart in the modern law.

<sup>23</sup> Dig. 1. 8. 1 pr.

<sup>24</sup> Dig. 45. 3. 28. 4.

<sup>25</sup> Inst. 2. 14. 2; Dig. 41. 1. 34.

<sup>26</sup> Dig. 43. 24. 13, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Duff, p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 61.

- (i) *Patria potestas*. The French Code retains the rubric *de la puissance paternelle*, but what is meant in fact is parental authority, which belongs to both parents, though "the father alone exercises this authority during the marriage".<sup>29</sup> The German Code speaks of *elterliche Gewalt*. Both systems give the parent the usufruct of a child's property (except his earnings) during minority (in French Law until the age of eighteen or emancipation), subject to the duty of education and maintenance.<sup>30</sup> It is obvious that the modern parental authority is a very pale reflex of the Roman *patria potestas* even in the latest stage of its development.
- (ii) *Marriage*. The Canon Law accepted and transmitted to the modern world the Roman principle that marriage is concluded by consent. The Council of Trent (1563) added the requirement of the presence of the parish priest and two or three witnesses. England followed the old Canon Law until 1753 (Lord Hardwicke's Act), Scotland until 1940 (Marriage (Scotland) Act, 1939), and this is still law in many of the States of the American Union. It seems that English Law still recognises as valid the so-called common law marriage (concluded by mere consent), if contracted in a part of the world where formalities are inexistent or unsuitable.<sup>31</sup>
- (iii) *Marriage of minors*. Certain consents are commonly required, in the first instance of parents. In France a marriage contracted without the required consents may be avoided at the instance of the persons whose consent is required, or of the minor<sup>32</sup>; in South Africa at the instance of the parents alone.<sup>33</sup> In England, want of consent does not *per se* make a marriage void or voidable, though a minor (infant) who falsely declares that consent has been obtained incurs a penalty.<sup>34</sup>
- (iv) *Status of married women*. By the English common law, "the very being and existence of the woman is suspended during the coverture or entirely merged or incorporated in that of her husband. And hence it follows that whatever personal property belonged to the wife before marriage is by marriage absolutely vested in the husband".<sup>35</sup> Further, she was in general incapable of concluding a contract. Equity came to her relief with the doctrine of the separate estate of the married woman. Today by statute she enjoys all the freedom of a *feme sole*.<sup>36</sup> In France there are many "matrimonial

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<sup>29</sup> C. C. art. 373.

<sup>30</sup> C. C. arts. 384 ff.; B. G. B. arts. 1649, 1651, 1686.

<sup>31</sup> Cheshire, *Private International Law* (2), p. 244.

<sup>32</sup> C. C. art. 182.

<sup>33</sup> Lec, pp. 58, 59.

<sup>34</sup> Jenks, arts. 1855, 1857.

<sup>35</sup> Blackstone, *Commentaries*, II, 433.

<sup>36</sup> Law Reform (Married Women and Tortfeasors) Act, 1935, ss. 1—5. The first important statutory advance was made by the Married Women's Property Act, 1882.

systems" including the dotal system of Roman Law, but not one of them goes so far as the English Law in the direction of freedom. In South Africa this degree of freedom can be secured by antenuptial contract.<sup>37</sup>

- (v) *Divorce*. From the first, the Christian Church set its face against divorce, but many centuries elapsed before the principle was established that a consummated marriage is dissolved by death alone. This is law today in countries in which ecclesiastical influences are predominant.<sup>38</sup> It was the law of England until the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1857, with the consequence that marriage could be dissolved only by Act of Parliament, as is still the case in Northern Ireland and in the Province of Quebec. In countries which do not follow the Canon Law divorce is admitted on more or less easy terms. For the existing English Law see Matrimonial Causes Act, 1937. A freedom of divorce commensurate with the Roman Law existed in Soviet Russia from 1918 to 1944.<sup>39</sup>
- (vi) *Legitimation by subsequent marriage*. See above § 95.
- (vii) *Adoption*. Most modern systems permit the adoption of minors, with various consequences. The English Adoption of Children Act, 1926, does not affect rights of succession in either family. In France and in Germany an adopted child inherits property *ab intestato* from the adoptive parent, but not from any relative of the adoptive parent. He retains the right of intestate succession in the family of origin. The South African Children's Act, 1937, has provisions to the same effect.
- (viii) *Emancipation*. Many systems of law admit the emancipation of minors, but only with the effect of freeing them from some of the disabilities of minority.<sup>40</sup> This is not emancipation in the Roman sense. Other systems of law have adopted in place of emancipation the useful Roman institution of *venia aetatis* (§ 127). English Law affords no such ways of escape from the disabilities of infancy.
- (ix) *Guardianship*. Modern systems of law with a Roman background, such as the French, reproduce with variations the principal features of the Roman *tutela* and *cura*. Thus in France the tutor is charged with the care of the person of the ward (this was not so in Roman Law), is his legal representative and as such within limits competent to bind him by contracts made in his name, and administers the property,<sup>41</sup> but does not, as in Roman Law and many other countries (Germany, Switzerland, South Africa), "authorise" the

<sup>37</sup> Lee, p. 81.

<sup>38</sup> *Cod. Jur. Can.* c. 1118. *Matrimonium validum ratum et consummatum nulla humana potestate, nullaue causa praeterquam morte dissolvi potest.*

<sup>39</sup> *Nachimson v. Nachimson*, [1930] P. 127.

<sup>40</sup> *E.g.*, C. C. art. 476 ff.

<sup>41</sup> C. C. art. 460 (same in German law).

minor's contract.<sup>42</sup> The "family council" is an intrusive element in the system, of customary origin, quite unsuited to modern conditions. In English Law the modern guardian may be guardian of the person or guardian of the estate or both. In the second of these capacities he acts as trustee for the ward. He neither contracts in his name, nor authorises his contracts. Here again the English Law affords the minor no means of escape from his disabilities. It is equally a stranger to interdiction on the ground of prodigality; and the Court has even gone so far as to refuse recognition to a foreign conseil judiciaire, who corresponds in French Law to the Roman curator prodigi.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Jossierand, *Cours de droit civil positif français*, I § 405.

<sup>43</sup> *Re Selot's Trust*, [1902] 1 Ch. 488.

## BOOK II

### THE LAW OF PROPERTY

#### I. PRELIMINARY

131. The second principal branch of the Roman Private Law is the Law relating to Things. This is treated by Gaius in Books II and III. In Justinian's Institutes it extends also to the first five Titles of Book IV. By "Thing" (*res*) the Romans understand any unit of economic value. "The true point of contact between the various *res* seems in reality to be the fact that whoever has a *res* is actually or prospectively so much the better off" (Moyle). "*Res* . . . means any economic interest guaranteed by law, any right or rights having a money value, any interest expressible in terms of money which the law will protect" (Buckland). The Law relating to Things, therefore, is the Law relating to Property, understood in a sense wide enough to include the Law of Obligations and the Law of Succession. In this book the term "Law of Property" is used in a more limited sense, exclusive of Obligations and Succession.

132. CLASSIFICATION OF THINGS.—Things may be classified according to their physical nature, or according to the technical rules of the legal system in question. Thus, if we classify things as movable and immovable we have regard to their physical nature; if we classify them as real and personal, as in English Law, or as mancipable and non-mancipable (*res Mancipi*—*res nec Mancipi*), as in Roman Law, we have regard to arbitrary distinctions created by law. But the first principle of classification is not so simple as it looks; for it is often difficult to say whether for legal purposes a thing is to be regarded as movable or immovable, and a thing which is treated as movable for one purpose may for another be treated as immovable. So that, in the last resort, we are concerned not with the question, what things are in themselves, but with the question, what is the attitude of the law with regard to them. The classifications adopted by the Roman lawyers are, in the main, the result of historical development or practical convenience. They display little inclination towards scientific analysis.

133. Justinian begins his second Book by saying, "Things



2. 1 pr. are either in our patrimony or outside our patrimony"; by which he means that there are certain things which in law or in fact are not the subject of private ownership.<sup>1</sup> These are :—(a) Things common to all men (*res communes*)—the air, running water, the sea and the sea-shore; (b) things public (*res publicae*)—rivers and harbours; (c) things belonging to a corporate body, such as theatres, race-courses and the like in cities (*res universitatis*); (d) things belonging to no one (*res nullius*), comprising :—(i) sacred things (*res sacrae*), *i.e.* churches and other things dedicated to the service of God; (ii) religious things (*res religiosae*), *i.e.* graveyards and graves; (iii) sanctioned things (*res sanctae*), such as city walls and gates. They are said to be sanctioned, because any offence against them is punished capitally; and penalties imposed by law are termed "sanctions". The first two of these are said to be matter of divine right (*divini juris*), and the term applies in a way to the third as well (*quodammodo divini juris sunt*).

134. All this is very confused. The distinction between things common and things public is ill-defined, and has no practical value. As to the sea-shore, there is no reason in the nature of things why it should not be owned by private persons, as it may be in English Law by grant from the Crown. Indeed, there are texts which say that one may become owner of a portion of the shore by building upon it, remaining owner, however, only so long as the building stands.<sup>2</sup> But, in general, the shore was not owned by individuals. One text suggests that it was the property of the Roman People.<sup>3</sup> More often it is regarded as owned by no one, the public having undefined rights of use and enjoyment. Rivers are said to be public. But a river was not public unless it flowed perennially, *i.e.* all the year round, though it did not lose its character if it happened to go dry in a single summer.<sup>4</sup> The public had rights of fishing and navigation and of incidental use of the banks. Whether the river-bed belonged to the Roman People, or to the riparian owners, or to no one was never clearly defined. There was, no doubt, a tendency, which became more pronounced as time went on, to regard all *res publicae* as the property of the Roman People, or, as we should say, of

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<sup>1</sup> In nostro patrimonio—extra nostrum patrimonium. *Res in commercio*—extra commercium—things susceptible or not of private transactions—mean much the same.

<sup>2</sup> Dig. 1. 8. 6 pr. (Marcianus); 41 1. 14. (Neratius).

<sup>3</sup> Dig. 43. 8. 3 pr. (Celsus).

<sup>4</sup> Dig. 43. 12. 1, 2.

the State,<sup>5</sup> and, similarly, *res universitatis* were regarded as the property of the *universitas*.

135. The phrase *res nullius* is used in various senses:—

- (a) to include all things which according to Roman ideas are not susceptible of private ownership;
- (b) specifically, as above, of things sacred, religious and sanctioned;
- (c) of things which, though susceptible of ownership, are not at the moment owned, *e.g.*, wild animals uncaptured, or things which have been abandoned by their owner (*res derelictae*).

136. Things are distinguished as corporeal and incorporeal (*res corporales*—*res incorporales*). “Corporeal things are things which can be touched, as land, a slave, a garment, gold, silver and other things innumerable.” “Incorporeal things are things which cannot be touched. Such are things which consist in a right, as an inheritance, usufruct, obligations in whatever way contracted.” It is commonly objected that this classification is illogical, because it confounds physical things with rights. But from the Roman point of view there is no confusion. I can own “this thing” and I can own “this right”; each is an asset of value to me and therefore a *res*. No doubt, ownership of a corporeal thing is a right or a bundle of rights. But usage identifies ownership of a corporeal thing with the thing owned, so that ownership, alone of rights, is regarded as corporeal; or, rather, the thing is substituted for the right. All other rights remain incorporeal. 2. 2. 1. 2. 2. 2.

137. Through the whole course of Roman Law, until the distinction was formally abolished by Justinian,<sup>6</sup> things were distinguished as mancipable and non-mancipable (*res Mancipi*—*res nec Mancipi*). Mancipable things were things which were transferred by mancipation. All other things were non-mancipable. Particulars will be given when we come to speak of modes of acquisition. G. 2. 22

138. The classification of things as movable and immovable was not of cardinal importance in Roman Law, because for most purposes the law did not distinguish between them. It is true that Italian soil, as will be seen, being a *res Mancipi*, required a special method of conveyance. But this was limited in area and came to be an unessential formality. In the

<sup>5</sup> Any State-owned property was in a sense *res publica*, but not in the special sense in which the term is used in this context. It was said to be in *patrimonio* or in *pecunia populi* (Dig. 41. 1. 14 pr.; 18. 1. 6 pr.) or in *patrimonio fisci* (Dig. 43. 8. 2, 4.)

<sup>6</sup> Cod. 7. 31. 1, 5.

classical era land no less than movables might, in effect, be conveyed by simple delivery. But there were some differences between movable and immovable property. The periods of usucapion were not the same (§ 162). Movables could be stolen, land not (§ 584). In relation to possession and the possessory interdicts the rules were different.<sup>7</sup> Some distinctions result from the nature of the things themselves. What are called real or praedial servitudes (rights of way, rights of support, etc.) are naturally inapplicable to movables. In the later Empire the distinction between movables and immovables became more prominent owing to the introduction of special modes of conveyance applicable to land (§ 196). In the Middle Ages this became the principal basis of classification and it has persisted in modern systems of law. In English Law it has tended more and more to replace the old classification of things as real and personal.

139. It might be expected that before going on, as Justinian does, to consider the methods by which ownership is acquired, he would have said something about the nature of ownership in general and of Roman ownership in particular. But this he does not do. The Institutes is an admirable introduction to the study of Roman Law. It is not a manual of Jurisprudence<sup>8</sup> or of Legal History. It becomes necessary, therefore, to mention some distinctions which perhaps have more interest for us than they had for the compilers of the Institutes.

140. Roman ownership, or, as it was called, ownership by quiritary title (*dominium ex jure Quiritium*), implies a Roman owner of a Roman thing acquired by Roman process. It was not available (privileged cases apart) to peregrines, because they were not citizens. It was inapplicable (privileged cases apart) to provincial land, because provincial land (technically) was not owned by individuals, but by the Roman People or the Emperor.<sup>9</sup> It was not a consequence of transfer by tradition of a *res mancipi*, because ownership of a *res mancipi* could not be transferred by tradition. But long before Justinian these distinctions had become unimportant. The constitution Antoniniana of A.D. 212 had extended citizenship to the whole Roman world (§§ 74, 82); the difference between Italian and provincial soil was merely formal; a perfectly satisfactory (praetorian) title to *res mancipi* could be procured by tradition.

<sup>7</sup> Inst. 4. 15. 4a.

<sup>8</sup> Except, indeed, that legal science has been built upon a Roman Law foundation, and has borrowed from Roman Law much of its terminology (see Preface to this book).

<sup>9</sup> G. 2. 7, 21. See note on Inst. 2. 1. 40, *infra*.

While these distinctions lasted they gave rise in classical law to "inferior modes of holding which may be called Ownership".<sup>10</sup> These were :—1, Ownership by peregrines; 2, ownership of provincial land; 3, the so-called "bonitary ownership" of mancipable things conveyed by tradition. The first two did not come within the normal vision of a Roman lawyer. The third is more important. We shall meet with it again when we come to speak of the law of usucapion (§ 160). It is effective ownership separated from civil law title.<sup>11</sup>

141. The Roman classification of things as corporeal and incorporeal obscures the separate position in the legal system of the Law of Succession and the Law of Obligations. Justinian does not, in fact, in any part of the Institutes consider "things", in the wider sense which he gives to the word, as a single and separate topic. After the preliminary observations on the classification of things summarised above, he goes on to consider the ways in which things are acquired by particular title (not things in general, but corporeal things). It is only when he has described the modes of acquisition by natural law, devoting to this subject the remainder of the first Title of his Second Book, that in Title II he distinguishes things corporeal and things incorporeal. This is made the occasion for a description of praedial servitudes, rustic and urban, and of usufruct, use and habitation, commonly described, but not in the Institutes, as personal servitudes, together with the ways in which these rights are created and determined (Tits. III to V). Then, reverting to the acquisition of things, he describes the principal subsisting mode of acquisition by civil law, namely, usucapion, and its later development, long-time-prescription (Tit. VI). Title VII is devoted to donation, described as "another mode of acquisition". The subject of Title VIII is "Persons who may, and who may not alienate", of Title IX "Persons through whom we acquire". The last section of this Title prepares the reader for a transition to modes of acquisition by universal title. The subject of inheritance, testamentary and intestate, together with its

<sup>10</sup> Buckl. T. p. 189; M. 113.

<sup>11</sup> G. 2. 40, 41. Normally civil law title and effective ownership go together. When they are separated the first is called "bare Quiritary title" (*nudum jus Quiritium*), the second has come to be known as "bonitary ownership". The term is an invention of the commentators. Theophilus has the phrase "bonitary owner". The classical writers say that a man "has a thing in his goods", or that "it is in his goods" (in bonis habere—in bonis esse). There were other cases of bonitary ownership besides that mentioned above, especially *bonorum possessio* (§ 373) and *bonorum emptio* (§ 736). Buckl. M. p. 114.

praetorian equivalent, possession of goods, occupies the remainder of Book II and the first nine Titles of Book III. Titles X—XII of Book III treat of acquisition by adrogation and some other modes of universal succession. Then in Title XIII we are introduced abruptly to the topic of obligations with the remark “Let us now pass to obligations”.

142. This arrangement of the subject-matter, however imperfect, brings into view *seriatim* most of the topics, which in a textbook on the private law of Rome we might expect to find occupying a central position between the Law of Persons on the one hand and the Law of Actions on the other. But for some other such topics we look in vain. There is no discussion of possession, or of real rights other than servitudes.<sup>12</sup> Whatever may have been the Roman point of view, it is here that a modern reader expects to find these subjects treated. We supply these gaps, therefore, in this commentary; and, departing from the comprehensive terminology of the Institutes, divide the Law of Things into three principal sections, dealing with:—I. The Law of Property (including Ownership, Real Rights less than Ownership, and Possession); II. The Law of Succession; III. The Law of Obligations. It would be more logical to reverse the order of these two last topics, but in conformity with the purpose of this book we adhere to the order of the Institutes.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II (Tits. I and II)

#### TITLE I

##### *Of the classification of things*

§ 133.

In the first Book we have explained the law of persons. We are now to speak of things; which are either in our patrimony, or outside our patrimony. Some things are by natural law common to all men, some are public, some belong to a corporate body, some belong to no one, most things belong to individuals, and are acquired by various methods, as will appear from what follows.

1. By natural law the air, flowing water, the sea, and therefore the shores of the sea are common to all. Consequently, no one is forbidden to approach the shore, provided that he does not interfere with dwelling-houses, monuments and buildings, for these are not subject to the *jus gentium*, as the sea is. 2. All rivers and harbours are public; consequently the right of fishing in a harbour and in rivers is common to everyone. 3. The sea-shore extends to the

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<sup>12</sup> The explanation of the omission is that the Roman tradition did not assign these topics to the Law of Things. Buckl. *Main Institutions*, pp. 108, 144.

limit reached by the highest winter flood. 4. The use of river-banks is public and *juris gentium*, like the use of the river itself; and so every one is free to put in at the bank, to fasten ropes to trees growing on the bank, or to land a cargo, just as every one is free to navigate the stream. But the ownership of the banks and of trees growing on them is vested in the riparian proprietors. 5. The use of sea-shores too is public and *juris gentium*, like the use of the sea itself, and so any one may set up a hut to retire into, may dry his nets, and draw them up from the sea. But the ownership of the shores may be supposed to be vested in no one, and to be governed by the same law as the sea and the sea-bottom.

6. Things belonging to a corporate body, not to individuals, are, for example, things in cities, such as theatres, race-courses and the like, and any other things which are the common property of cities.

7. Things belonging to no one are sacred things, religious things, sanctioned things; for a thing which is subject to divine law is owned by no one. 8. Those things are sacred which are duly consecrated to God by the Bishops, such as sacred buildings, and offerings dedicated to the service of God; which things, as our constitution<sup>13</sup> enacts, may not be alienated or pledged except for the redemption of captives. If any one by his own authority purports to make a thing sacred, it is not sacred, but profane. A site on which sacred buildings have been built remains sacred (as Papinian wrote) even after the destruction of the building. 9. Any one may make a place religious at his pleasure by burying a corpse in his own ground. If ordinary ground is owned in common one co-owner may not use it for burial without the consent of the rest, but it is different in the case of a burial-place owned in common. Similarly, if property is subject to a usufruct the owner may not make it religious without the consent of the usufructuary. § 231. A person may bury in another man's land with the consent of the owner. Subsequent ratification is equivalent to consent.

10. Sanctioned things too, such as city-walls and gates, are in a way matter of divine law, and, therefore, no one's property. City walls are said to be sanctioned because capital punishment is ordained against those who violate them. The part of a statute ordaining a penalty in the event of its infringement is called a sanction.

[For sec. 11, see p. 123.]

## TITLE II

### *Of incorporeal things*

Some things are corporeal, some incorporeal.

1. Corporeal things are things which by their nature are tangible, such as land, a slave, a garment, gold, silver and other things innumerable. 2. Incorporeal things are intangible; such are things consisting in a right, for example an inheritance, usufruct, use, obligations howsoever contracted. Nor does it make any difference that

an inheritance includes corporeal things; for the fruits too, which are gathered from land are corporeal, and what is due to us under any obligation is usually corporeal, for example land, a slave or money. But the right of inheritance, the right of usufruct, the right of obligation, are incorporeal. 3. We refer to the same head those rights appurtenant to houses and land which are called servitudes.

## II. MODES OF ACQUISITION

143. We pass to the subject of modes of acquisition, the processes by which a thing becomes mine. These are distinguished as original and derivative, the first when the thing of which I become owner had no previous owner, or at least when my ownership stands in no necessary relation to that of the person who owned before me; the second when I derive my title from some one who owned before me, and take subject to any real burdens which attach to the property. This distinction is made by medieval and modern writers. It is not found in the texts of the Roman Law.

2. 1. 11 144. Justinian says that we acquire things either by natural law, which he here identifies with the *jus gentium*, or by civil law. The first, he adds, is plainly the older, since it is as old as the human race. It is said, with justice, that, so far as the Roman Law is concerned, this inverts the historical sequence. This does not mean that the early Romans did not recognise occupation and tradition as modes of acquisition. On the contrary, as regards the first, Gaius says that "they considered nothing so entirely theirs as what they had taken from the enemy". But in any legal system what is technical and peculiar engages attention before what is simple and universal; and, besides, some of the *juris gentium* modes of acquisition have all the air of an after-thought. Reversing therefore the order of the Institutes and preferring that of Gaius, we shall speak—first, of the civil modes of acquisition; afterwards, of the natural modes of acquisition. So far as the legal consequence is concerned there is no difference between them. Both alike made the acquirer owner of the thing acquired.
- G. 4. 16.

## III. ACQUISITION BY CIVIL LAW

2. 7. 4 145. The civil law modes of acquisition described in the text are usucapion and donation, and another of minor importance which Justinian abolished. In the earlier law the two principal modes of acquisition by civil law were mancipation and cession in Court (*cessio in jure*). Justinian does not mention them. They had passed out of use before his

time. But they are of historical importance and must be considered in some detail. We shall speak, therefore, of:—

1. Mancipatio; 2. In jure cessio; 3. Usucapio. Donation, which was not in fact usually a mode of acquisition, is reserved for separate treatment (p. 143).

146. MANCIPIATIO.—Gaius described this as follows:—

“Mancipation is a fictitious sale, a process peculiar to Roman citizens. It is effected thus:— G. 1. 119

“There are brought together not less than five witnesses, Roman citizens above the age of puberty and another person similarly qualified, who is to hold a bronze balance, and is called the libripens. Then the person who is acquiring by mancipation, taking hold of the thing<sup>14</sup> to be transferred uses the following form of words:—‘This man<sup>15</sup> I declare to be mine by quiritary right, and he he bought to me with this bronze and bronze balance’: then he strikes the balance with a piece of bronze and gives it to the transferor by way of price.”

The declaration made by the purchaser was termed the “nuncupation” from the verb nuncupare meaning to make a public declaration.<sup>16</sup>

Ulpian<sup>17</sup> supplies some further particulars:—

“Mancipation takes place between Roman citizens and Latin colonists and Junian Latins and peregrines to whom commercium has been conceded. Commercium is the right of buying and selling.<sup>18</sup> Movable things cannot be mancipated unless they are present, and not more than can be grasped in the hand. But several immovables, even though situate in different places, can be mancipated simultaneously.”

It may be supposed that, in the case of immovables, as in the procedure by *legis actio sacramenti*, a sod of earth or something of the kind was taken to represent the property which was being sold. There is no apparent reason why the same symbolism should not have been available also in the case of movables. G. 4. 17

147. Gaius speaks of mancipation as a “fictitious sale”, because, though in form a sale, in his time the process was a general mode of conveyance, limited indeed to certain kinds of property, but applicable to any kind of transaction, sale, gift, constitution of a *dos* (§ 208) and others. But originally, the transaction was in fact, what later it was feigned to be, a sale for ready money. Before the introduction of coined

<sup>14</sup> *Rem tenens*, not *aes tenens*—holding a piece of bronze—which some editors substitute on poor authority.

<sup>15</sup> The sale of a slave is taken as a typical transaction.

<sup>16</sup> G. 2. 104.

<sup>17</sup> *Liber singularis Regularum*, XIX, 4, 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Scilicet*, by the formal processes of the civil law.



money, not, as was once supposed, by the Decemvirs, but nearly two centuries later, the medium of exchange was uncoined bronze (*aes rude*), which had to be weighed to determine the amount. This was the function of the *libripens*. When coined money came into use, the weighing became a fiction, the bronze currency being represented by an ingot of bronze, known as *raudusculum*. The ceremony was now merely dramatic. The actual contract, sale or whatever it might be, took place, so to say, off stage.

148. No doubt the transition from the real to the fictitious sale was gradual. There must have been steps in the process which are unknown to us. The formula preserved by Gaius raises more than one question to which no answer has been found. Why this declaration of ownership, recalling the procedure in the *legis actio sacramenti* (§ 656) and in the process of *iure cessio*, to be mentioned later (§ 153)? Why the five witnesses? Some have imagined a connection with the five classes of the Servian constitution (§ 4). The formula employed must have admitted of modifications to meet the circumstances of the case. The transferor may in some cases have made a contemporaneous declaration, but this is disputed. In any event it was not necessary that he should do so. It must be borne in mind that it was the ceremony that vested the property in the "purchaser". Actual delivery was not essential.

149. We must now ask what things could be conveyed by this process. The answer is *res Mancipi* and (it seems) only *res Mancipi*. The term includes:—(a) land and houses in Italy and in certain privileged districts outside Italy; (b) rustic servitudes over such land; (c) slaves and beasts of draft and burden.<sup>19</sup> Everything else, including public land (*ager publicus*), provincial lands, and urban servitudes (§ 223) were *res nec Mancipi*.

150. Why were the above-mentioned things grouped together to form one class? Because they constituted the principal wealth of a primitive rural community. These were the things which were entered upon the census roll and determined the assessment of the individual citizen. There may have been an earlier period when alienable property in land was unknown and *res Mancipi* meant, as the etymology seems to suggest, movable property, things which could be grasped by the hand.

151. We have seen that the *Mancipatory* sale implies the

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<sup>19</sup> G. 2. 14a; Ulp. XIX. 1.

use of uncoined bronze as a medium of exchange. There was an earlier time when cattle were the standard of value. This is indicated by the etymological connection between *pecus*=cattle and *pecunia*=money. But the two stages overlapped. It may safely be said that the mancipatory sale goes a long way back. Perhaps it was common to Rome and her Latin neighbours.<sup>20</sup>

152. Mancipation was a living institution in the time of Gaius and was still in use two centuries later.<sup>21</sup> But the ceremonial became unnecessary because a recital in a written instrument that the forms had been complied with was allowed to serve the same purpose.<sup>22</sup> This eliminated balance and balance-holder, ingot of bronze and *nuncupatio*. In this form—the shadow of a symbol—it lingered on in the notarial style of what had been the Western Empire even after Justinian had formally abolished the distinction between *res Mancipi* and *res nec Mancipi* (§ 137) and with it the continued existence of an institution which had long since been useless and seldom employed. It had been superseded by the simple method of transferring ownership by tradition. While it lasted it had, indeed, the one advantage that ownership could be transferred by this method without transfer of possession (therefore, not necessarily on the spot) and was available to an owner of immovable (possibly also of movable) property, who for whatever reason was not in actual possession at the time.<sup>23</sup> But in the later Empire a deed of transfer was equally available for this purpose (§ 196), so that it was matter of indifference whether land was conveyed in one way or in the other. It was merely a question of the form of words employed, that is of notarial style.

153. *IN JURE CESSIO*.—This is another civil law mode of acquisition, for a description of which we again turn to Gaius.

“In jure cessio takes place as follows:—

G. 2. 24.

“Before a magistrate of the Roman People, such as the urban praetor, the person to whom the cession is made, holding the thing in question says: ‘This man I declare to be mine by *quiritary* right’; and when he has vindicated the praetor asks the person who cedes whether he makes a counter-vindication. If he says no or says nothing, the praetor awards the thing to the person who has vindicated it. This is called a *legis actio* (statute-process). It may also take place

<sup>20</sup> Girard, p. 308, n. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Girard, p. 314.

<sup>22</sup> Arangio-Ruiz, p. 185.

<sup>23</sup> Girard, p. 314.

G. 2 25. in the provinces before the governor. We usually or almost always employ mancipation. For when we can do a thing for ourselves in the presence of witnesses, why should we give ourselves the greater trouble of resorting to the praetor or provincial governor?"

Ulpian describes the process succinctly :—<sup>24</sup>

"In jure cessio is a method of alienation common to res Mancipi and to res nec Mancipi. It requires three persons—the person who cedes—the person who vindicates—the person who awards. The owner cedes: the cessionary vindicates: the praetor awards."

In jure cessio, then, is a fictitious real action or vindication, resembling the common recovery of English Law, but arrested in its initial stage by the alienor, who plays the part of defendant, admitting the claim of the alienee, who is the fictitious plaintiff.<sup>25</sup>

154. This form of conveyance was used for the following purposes :—

- (a) to alienate corporeal property of every kind whether res Mancipi or res nec Mancipi;
- (b) to transfer incorporeal things other than obligations, such as inheritance;<sup>26</sup>
- (c) to create and extinguish<sup>27</sup> praedial servitudes and usufruct.

For urban servitudes this was the only method available. Rustic servitudes could also be created by mancipation (§ 149). In the Law of Persons we have met with in jure cessio in connection with manumissio vindicta (§ 67), adoption (§ 104), and the tutela legitima of women (§ 125).

155. Being a civil law mode of acquisition, in jure cessio was available only to Roman citizens and in respect of things susceptible of Roman ownership (*dominium ex jure Quiritium*). It passed out of use in the post-classical period, and, as a mode of acquisition, had disappeared before the time of Justinian.

156. *USUCAPIO*.—It may happen that a person is in possession of property as owner but without legal title. In such a case all mature legal systems recognise him as owner, or, at least, give him the substantial advantages of ownership, if he continues to possess for the period defined by law and satisfies other necessary conditions. This is called acquisitive

<sup>24</sup> XIX, 9, 10.

<sup>25</sup> For another theory see Buckl. *M.*, p. 124.

<sup>26</sup> G. 2. 38, 34.

<sup>27</sup> G. 2. 29, 30; Girard, p. 403.

prescription. The Roman Law gave effect to this mode of acquisition under the name of *usucapio*. Later, an analogous institution grew up in the provinces called long-time-prescription (*longi temporis praescriptio*). But it will be convenient to treat the whole subject under the head of *usucapion*.

157. In order that property may be acquired by *usucapion* the following conditions must be satisfied. There must be a thing susceptible of ownership—title—good faith—possession—lapse of time. They are summed up in the line—

*Res habilis, titulusque, fides, possessio, tempus.*

158. (i) The thing in question must be capable of being the subject of transactions between Roman citizens (*res in commercio*), and must not be declared incapable of alienation by any rule of law. This excludes all *res extra commercium*, e.g., *res sacrae*, *religiosae*, *sanctae* (§ 133). It excludes a free man, who is not a *res*, and provincial land, which is technically incapable of private ownership (§ 140). Dotal immovables cannot be acquired by this method because they are inalienable, nor the immovable property of pupilli and minores XXV annis for the same reason.<sup>28</sup> Stolen property (*res furtiva*) could not be acquired even by a possessor in good faith. This was enacted by the Twelve Tables and a *lex Atinia* of unknown date. But the “vice” of theft was purged, if the thing returned to its owner, or at least “if the owner knew where the thing was and there was no obstacle to his vindication of it”.<sup>29</sup> After this, it ceased to be a *res furtiva*. Later legislation (*lex Julia et Plautia*) extended the same prohibition to things movable or immovable possessed by violence (*res vi possessa*). 2. 6. 2. 2. 6. 8.

159. (ii) There must be a just cause (*justa causa*) or just title (*justus titulus*). The phrases are equivalent. “Just cause” or “just title” means an antecedent or contemporaneous event which, in normal circumstances, makes acquisition of possession take effect as acquisition of ownership. A mere handing over of a thing is colourless. It may be for momentary convenience, or by way of deposit or loan. Equally, it may be made with the intention of transferring ownership and with the normal consequence that ownership passes. Thus, a man may acquire by way of sale, gift, legacy and so forth. Justinian says that a mistaken belief that a cause exists, when it does not, excludes *usucapion*. In other words a putative title is insufficient. There must be an actual sale, an actual gift, etc. In the 2. 6. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Girard, p. 330.

<sup>29</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 248.

case of legacy the person claiming to usucape must be a legatée.<sup>30</sup> If the thing in question is supposed to be a *res nullius* there must have been an abandonment by a non-owner and something equivalent to occupation.<sup>31</sup> But a tendency developed, evidenced by texts in the Digest, to admit usucapion when the error was excusable, at all events in case of sale.<sup>32</sup>

2. § pr.

160. (iii) There must be good faith. If a person finds himself honestly in possession as owner without civil law ownership this is usually due to one or both of the following facts :—(a) He has acquired from a person who had no title to convey the ownership; (b) he has acquired by a process not apt to make him civil law owner. This second situation arises, in particular, if a *res mancipi* is conveyed by tradition, not by mancipation, but it exists also in any other case of so-called bonitary ownership (*bonorum possessio—bonorum emptio*, etc.).<sup>33</sup> To constitute good faith the acquirer must honestly believe that the transaction has made him owner at least by praetorian title. This generally implies a belief founded in an error of fact, not of law, that the person from whom he thinks that he derives his title was owner or competent to alienate. I can usucape if I have bought from a pupillus, not authorised by his tutor, believing him to be *pubes*, or from an insane person believing him to be *sane*.<sup>34</sup> It was enough that possession originated in good faith. It was not necessary that good faith should continue during the period of possession. There was an exception in the case of donation until Justinian altered the law.<sup>35</sup> The Canon Law required good faith throughout (*mala fides superveniens nocet*) and this has influenced modern codes.

161. (iv) There must be possession, *i.e.*, juristic possession, not mere detention (§ 253). This implies *corpus* and *animus*—physical control and the intention to possess as owner. These need not necessarily co-exist in the same person. A person may acquire and hold possession through a slave, a son in power, or a free agent (§ 216). In general both principal and agent must have the appropriate *animus*. The agent must intend to

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<sup>30</sup> Dig. 41. 8. (pro legato). But it was not fatal to usucapion that a legacy had been revoked by codicil unknown to the claimant. Dig. 41. 8. 4. This is a *titulus putativus*.

<sup>31</sup> Dig. 41. 7. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Buckl. T. 246; M. 129.

<sup>33</sup> Buckl. M. p. 126.

<sup>34</sup> Dig. 41. 4. 2. 15 and 16.

<sup>35</sup> Cod. 7. 31. 1, 3; Buckl. T. 244; M. p. 127.

acquire possession for his principal, not for himself. The principal must intend to acquire possession through the agent. But, if a slave or *filiusfamilias* makes an acquisition for the *peculium*, possession vests forthwith in the master or *paterfamilias* and *usucapion* begins to run in his favour although he is ignorant of the fact of acquisition.<sup>36</sup> This is because there is an implied authority to acquire by means of the *peculium*. If a free agent has a general authority to acquire possession for his principal, single acquisitions are acquired for the principal though he has not knowledge of each of them as it occurs, but in this case *usucapion* does not begin to run until he has knowledge of the single acquisition in question.<sup>37</sup>

162. (v) The possession must continue uninterrupted for the period defined by law. This was fixed by the Twelve Tables at two years for immovables, for other things one year. 2. 6 pr. In the latest period, as we shall see, the periods were longer. Interruption of *usucapion* is termed *usurpatio*. Any actual interruption for however short a time arrested the course of *usucapion*, and wiped out the effect of previous possession. In Justinian's system commencement of proceedings for the recovery of possession by the owner had the same effect.<sup>38</sup> In calculating the time of possession the heir or *bonorum possessor* was allowed credit for the unbroken possession of his predecessor in title joined to his own. This applied even if he knew that the title was defective. It was enough that his predecessor had the necessary good faith. This is called succession to possession (*successio in possessionem*). 2. 6. 12. It applies only to the universal successor. The particular successor (purchaser, donee, legatee, etc.) stood in a different position. A constitution of Severus and his son Antoninus, commonly called Caracalla, allowed a purchaser to add to his own time that of his vendor, but both must have had *bona fides* at the moment of acquisition. Justinian allowed the same advantage in all cases of singular succession.<sup>39</sup> This is called accession of possession (*accessio possessionis*). 2. 6. 13.

163. It is likely enough that the theory of *usucapion* was gradually developed. Gaius mentions cases in which good faith was not required. The most remarkable of these was *usucapion* as heir (*usucapio pro herede*). This is what he says :—

<sup>36</sup> Dig. 41. 2. 1, 5; 41. 3. 47.

<sup>37</sup> Cod. 7. 32. 1; Dig. 41. 2. 49, 2.

<sup>38</sup> Girard, p. 334.

<sup>39</sup> Dig. 41. 4. 2. 17; Cod. 7. 31. 1, 3.

Lib. II. 52. "Sometimes it happens that one who knows that he possesses a thing which does not belong to him may usucap; for example, if a person possesses a thing forming part of an inheritance (*res hereditaria*), of which the heir has not yet obtained possession; for he is allowed to usucap, provided the thing admits of usucapion. This kind of possession and usucapion is called *usucapio pro herede*. 53. This usucapion goes so far that even immovables are usucaped in one year. 54. The reason why in this case the usucapion of immovables is complete in one year is because formerly it was held that by possessing things belonging to an inheritance the inheritances themselves were usucaped at the end of a year. For the Law of the Twelve Tables ordained that immovables should be usucaped in two years, other things in one year: so an inheritance was thought to come under the description of "other things" since it is not an immovable: and, although it was afterwards considered that the inheritance itself could not be usucaped, none the less the usucapion of one year continued to apply to all things forming part of an inheritance, even immovables. 55. The reason why this iniquitous institution was allowed is because the ancients wanted inheritances to be accepted as soon as possible that there might be persons to perform the sacrifices, to which in those days great importance was attached, and that creditors might know who was to be looked to for payment of debts. 56. This kind of possession and usucapion is also called 'lucrative', because a person acquires gratis a thing which he knows to belong to some one else.

57. "But to-day, it is no longer lucrative; for at the instance of the late Emperor Hadrian a *senatusconsultum* was passed rescinding such usucapions; and so an heir by bringing an action for the inheritance may obtain any item of the inheritance from the person who has usucaped it just as if it had not been usucaped. 58. If there is in existence a *suus et necessarius* heres the law excludes the possibility of *usucapio pro herede*."<sup>40</sup>

It may be that the cases which Gaius treats as exceptional were survivals from a time when they were not exceptions, and that the usucapion of the Twelve Tables required neither good faith nor just title as a condition of usucapion.<sup>41</sup>

164. *LONGI TEMPORIS PRAESCRIPTIO*.—The institution of usucapio above described was available only to Roman citizens and only in respect of things susceptible of Roman ownership (*dominium ex jure Quiritium*). It did not apply to provincials (anywhere), or to provincial land. In the

<sup>40</sup> For other cases—*usureceptio ex fiducia*—*ex praediatūra*—see G. 2. 69–61; Buckl. *T.* p. 245; *M.* p. 128, and *infra*, §§ 250. 508. For *suus et necessarius heres* *vid. inf.* § 322.

<sup>41</sup> Girard, p. 327.

provinces an analogous institution existed called "long time prescription" or "long possession prescription" (*longi temporis vel longae possessionis praescriptio*). It has no connection with the *praescriptio* of the formulary procedure described by Gaius (§ 721). At first available as a defence, it became in course of time a mode of acquisition, always subject to the qualification that the holder of provincial land was not technically owner. The person who had held such land for ten years as against an owner domiciled in the same *civitas* (district, or, as Justinian defined it, province)<sup>42</sup> or for twenty years against an owner domiciled in a different district (province)<sup>43</sup> was allowed an action to recover possession of the land, if he had lost it, not only from third persons, but from the original owner as well. This institution was subject to the same condition of just title, good faith,<sup>44</sup> etc., as *usucapion*. A similar term of prescription may have been available to provincials in the case of movables.<sup>45</sup> A Roman citizen, anywhere, acquired movables by the normal process of *usucapion* after one year's possession.

165. LIMITATION OF ACTIONS.—From the acquisitive prescription above described must be distinguished the law as to limitation or prescription of actions. By an enactment of Theodosius II (A.D. 424) actions (where the law made no other provision) were barred by the lapse of thirty (sometimes forty) years.<sup>46</sup> A person who had let the statutory period go by without prosecuting his claim could not maintain an action. This is (very inaccurately) described as *extinctive prescription*. No substantive right was extinguished. If property passed into a third hand, the original owner could re-claim it, the long-possessor could not.<sup>47</sup> That is, he could not recover it as his property. He might no doubt have possessory remedies.

166. Justinian made extensive changes in the law :—

- (i) By an enactment of 528 he allowed a person whose possession had originated in good faith, though without just title, and who had held for the Theodosian period of thirty (or forty) years an action to vindicate the property from the original owner or from any third person, provided that the property (even though stolen from the

<sup>42</sup> Cod. 7. 33. 12, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Cod. 7. 39. 8 pr. This meant, in effect, that during absence the prescriptive period was doubled. Nov. 119. 8.

<sup>44</sup> *Semble*.

<sup>45</sup> Dig. 44. 3. 3, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Cod. 7. 39; Buckl. T. p. 251.

<sup>47</sup> Girard, p. 326.



owner) had not originally been acquired by violence.<sup>48</sup> This created a new case of acquisitive prescription which the commentators have labelled *longissimi temporis praescriptio*. The existing law as to limitation of actions remained unaffected. It was available notwithstanding that possession had been acquired in bad faith or by violence;

- (ii) Three years later Justinian swept away the ancient distinctions between civil and praetorian ownership and between *res Mancipi* and *res nec Mancipi*, and fused the institutions of *usucapio* and *longi temporis praescriptio*.<sup>49</sup> For the acquisition of movables he retained the old name of *usucapio*, extending the period from one year to three. The term *longi temporis praescriptio* was applied to the acquisition of immovables. Subject to what has been said as to *longissimi temporis praescriptio* the old conditions of *justus titulus*, *bona fides*, *res nec furtiva nec vi possessa*, continued to apply to movables and immovables alike.

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167. OTHER MODES OF ACQUISITION BY CIVIL LAW.—Property might vest in a person by statutory title (*lege*), *e.g.*, by the *lex Papia Poppaea*, which denied to unmarried and childless persons the right to take as heirs or legatees and vested the inheritance or legacy in others.<sup>50</sup> Ulpian refers to this head a legacy by vindication (§ 331), the statute in this case being the Twelve Tables. Another case of statutory title was created by a constitution of Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius (A.D. 389), by which a person asserting a claim to property (movable or immovable), who took possession of it by violence, forfeited it, if he was owner, to the person whom he had dispossessed.

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168. *Adjudicatio* was another civil law title. In certain actions known as *judicia divisoria* the judge was directed to award property in severalty among the interested parties. These actions were:—(a) *actio communi dividundo*—for division of property owned in common; (b) *actio familiae erciscundae*—for division of an estate vested in co-heirs; (c) *actio finium regundorum*—for determining boundaries. The word *adjudicatio* is applied both to this mode of acqui-

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<sup>48</sup> Cod. 7. 39. 8.<sup>49</sup> Cod. 7. 25; 7. 31.<sup>50</sup> Ulp. XIX, 17.

tion,<sup>51</sup> and to the clause in the formula, which contained the instruction to the judex (§ 703).

169. Yet another mode of acquisition by civil law was *litis aestimatio*. Since the formulary system did not admit decrees of specific performance (§ 699), but only condemnation in money, a defendant in a vindication who was willing to pay instead of restoring (§ 708) kept the property as his own, as if by purchase.<sup>52</sup>

### THE INSTITUTES

#### BOOK II (Tit. I, sec. 11, Tit. VI)

##### TITLE I, sec. 11.

Things become the property of individuals in many ways; of some things we acquire the ownership by natural law, which, as we have said, is called the *jus gentium*; of some things by civil law. It is more convenient to begin with the older law. Plainly, the older law is the law of nature, which nature brought into existence along with mankind, whereas civil laws came into being when cities began to be founded, magistrates to be created and laws to be written. § 144.

##### TITLE VI

##### *Of usucapion and long possession*

The civil law enacted that, if a person had in good faith bought a thing from a non-owner, believing him to be owner, or acquired it by donation or for any other just cause, he should usucap it, if a movable in one year everywhere, if an immovable in two years but only in Italian soil. This was to prevent the ownership of things remaining uncertain. The law was enacted because our ancestors thought that these periods gave owners time enough to look after their property. But we have taken a better course, so that owners may not be expropriated unreasonably soon, nor the benefit of the law confined to a particular area. Accordingly, we have published a constitution<sup>53</sup> providing that movables may be usucaped in three years, and immovables by long time possession, that is by ten years *inter praesentes* and by twenty years *inter absentes*; and ownership, if a just cause of possession precedes, may be thus acquired, not in Italy alone, but in every part of our Empire. § 162. § 166.

1. Sometimes, although a person has possessed in perfect good faith, no length of time will give ownership by usucapion; for example if a person possesses a free man or a thing sacred or

<sup>51</sup> Ulp. XIX, 16.

<sup>52</sup> Dig. 6. 1. 46.

<sup>53</sup> Cod. 7. 31.

religious or a run-away slave.<sup>54</sup> 2. Stolen things also and things possessed by violence cannot be usucaped even by bona fide possession for the above-mentioned periods; for the usucapion of stolen things is forbidden by the Law of the Twelve Tables and the lex Atinia, of things possessed by violence by the lex Julia et Plautia.<sup>55</sup>

§ 158 3. When it is said that the usucapion of things stolen and possessed by violence is forbidden by statute, this does not mean that the thief or the person who possesses by violence cannot usucape. In their case there is another reason why usucapion is not allowed, namely because they possess in bad faith. What is meant is that not even a person who acquires from them in good faith by purchase or for any other just cause has the right of usucapion. Consequently, it seldom happens that possessors in good faith become owners of movables by usucapion. For a person who sells or transfers for any other cause a thing which he knows does not belong to him commits theft. 4. However, this is not always so. For if an heir, thinking that a thing belongs to the inheritance, when it was in fact lent or let on hire to the deceased, or deposited with him, sells it or parts with it by way of gift or of dos to a person who acquires in good faith, there is no doubt that the acquirer can usucape, the thing not being affected with the vice of theft, since the heir who has in good faith disposed of the thing, supposing it to be his own, is not guilty of theft. 5. Again, if a person who has the usufruct of a female slave, supposing that her child is his property has sold or given it away, he is not guilty of theft, for theft is not committed without theftuous intent.<sup>56</sup>

§ 584. 6. There are other ways too in which it may happen that a person may transfer to another a thing which does not belong to him without affecting it with the vice of theft, and so put the possessor in a position to usucape. 7. Usucapion more easily takes place in the case of immovables, as, for instance, if a person without violence gets possession of a site which is left vacant owing to the absence or carelessness of the owner, or because he has died and left no one to succeed him. He is himself a mala fide possessor, because he knows that he has seized another man's land; none the less, if he has transferred it to a person who takes it in good faith, the transferee may acquire by long possession, because he has taken something which was neither stolen nor possessed by violence; for the opinion of some of the old lawyers that even land or a site could be stolen is no longer entertained, and imperial constitutions have consulted the interest of possessors of immovable property by providing that they are not to be deprived of long undisputed possession. 8. Sometimes, even a thing stolen or possessed by violence may be usucaped,

§ 158. as, for instance, if it has come back into the owner's power; for then, the vice which attached to the thing being purged, usucapion again becomes possible. 9. A thing belonging to our fiscus<sup>57</sup> cannot be usucaped. But Papinian wrote that if bona vacantia have not

<sup>54</sup> A servus fugitivus was a res furtiva. He had stolen himself. Dig. 2. 2. 61; Cod. 6. 1. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Of unknown date.

<sup>56</sup> This is error juris. Inst. 2. 1. 37.

<sup>57</sup> The Imperial Treasury.

yet been reported to the fiscus and any item in such goods has been delivered to a bona fide purchaser, he may usucap it. There are rescripts of the Emperor Pius and of the Emperors Severus and Antoninus to this effect. 10. Finally, it must be known that a thing must not be affected by any vice,<sup>58</sup> if it is to be usucaped by a bona fide purchaser or by a person who possesses by any other lawful cause.

11. A mistaken belief that a cause exists, when it does not, cannot be the foundation of usucapion; for example, if a person possesses thinking that he has bought when in fact he has not; or possesses by way of gift what has not been given. § 159.

12. Long-continued possession which has begun to run in favour of a deceased person is continued in favour of an heir or bonorum possessor, although he knows that he has no title to the property; but if the deceased person's possession was initially unlawful, his possession does not help the heir or bonorum possessor, though himself innocent. Our constitution ordains that the principle of continued possession is to apply also to usucapion [of movables].<sup>59</sup> § 169.

13. A rescript of the Emperors Severus and Antoninus provides that a purchaser may join to his possession the possession of his vendor.

14. An edict of the Emperor Marcus decrees that if a person has bought from the fiscus the property of some third person and five years<sup>60</sup> have elapsed after the sale, he may repel by exception the owner's claim. A constitution of the Emperor Zeno, of sacred memory, has made special provision for the case of persons who acquire from the fiscus by sale or gift or other title, so as to give them security and confidence of success whether they are defendants or plaintiffs. Any person who supposes that he has a right of action as owner of, or as having a hypothec over, any property so alienated has four years to bring his action against the Treasury (aerarium).<sup>61</sup> § 247. Our recent constitution extends to acquirers from our household or the household of the Empress the rule laid down by Zeno in the case of alienations by the fiscus.

#### IV. ACQUISITION BY NATURAL LAW

170. We pass now to modes of acquisition by natural law, viz., 1, occupation; 2, accession; 3, specification; 4, perception and separation of fruits; 5, tradition or delivery.

171. (1) OCCUPATIO.—This means taking possession of a res nullius with the intention of becoming owner. The following are the principal cases:—(a) wild beasts, birds and fishes;

<sup>58</sup> *Supra*, secs. 2, 4, 6.

<sup>59</sup> Cod. 7. 31. 3. It applied to usucapion before Justinian's reforms. What is meant is that it is to continue to apply to his new term of three years usucapion of movables.

<sup>60</sup> i.e., if the circumstances did not admit of the usual usucapion of one or two years.

<sup>61</sup> Cod. 7. 37. 2. This meant that the purchaser or other acquirer from the fiscus got a clean title though the title of the fiscus might be defective. In the late Empire the Treasury of the Roman People (aerarium) was not distinguishable from the fiscus.

(b) things taken from the enemy; (c) precious stones, gems, etc., found on the sea-shore; (d) unoccupied islands in the sea; (e) things abandoned by a former owner (*res derelictae*).

2. 1. 12. 172. (a) Wild beasts, birds and fishes. These become the property of the captor, whether taken on public or on private land, one's own or some one else's. If you go on some one else's land for the purpose of hunting or fowling, he may warn you off, if he sees you coming. If you persist in spite of the prohibition, your action assumes a contumelious character, and exposes you to an *actio injuriarum*,<sup>62</sup> but, none the less, you are owner of what you take.

173. Beasts and birds are distinguished as :—

- (i) naturally wild (*ferae naturae*), and
- (ii) naturally tame (*mansuetae naturae*).

This is a question of the species to which they belong. Thus there are wild geese and tame geese. Creatures wild by nature may in individual cases be more or less tamed or domesticated. Wild beasts and birds become yours when you take them, and remain yours so long as they are under your control. They are deemed to be under your control so long as they are in your sight, and pursuit is not difficult. The same applies to bees which have swarmed from your hive.

2. 1. 14. Tamed beasts and birds are those which, though naturally wild, have acquired a habit of going away and coming back.
2. 1. 15. They remain yours so long as the habit continues.<sup>62a</sup>

Tame animals are owned like anything else and remain yours, however far afield they may chance to wander and however long they may chance to stay away.

2. 1. 16.
2. 1. 17. 174. (b) Things taken from the enemy. These are said to become ours *jure gentium*. But the statement requires qualification. Enemy property is usually at the disposal of the conquering State, and is not acquired by individuals. This applies both to land and to booty. This last was sometimes distributed amongst the soldiers. If enemy property happens to be in my possession at the outbreak of war I may appropriate it to my own use.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> And to other proceedings according to the circumstances, e.g., *actio legis Aquiliae*, if damage is done. Roby I, 416, note.

<sup>62a</sup> Virgil supplies a pretty illustration.

*Cervus erat forma praestanti et cornibus ingens.*

*Ille manum patiens, mensaeque assuetus herili,  
Errabat silvis, rursusque ad limina nota  
Ipse domum scra quamvis se nocte ferebat.*  
(Aen. VII. 483 sequ.)

<sup>63</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 51.

(c). (d). (e). For other cases of occupatio it is sufficient to refer to the text of the Institutes (secs. 18, 22, 47).

175. (2) *ACCESSIO*.—This is the process by which a principal thing attracts to itself an accessory, so that the owner of the first becomes the owner of the second. The principal thing may be an immovable or a movable. The accessory may have been previously owned or unowned (*res nullius*). The accession may be effected by natural processes or by human agency or by a combination of both. The older commentators distinguish these cases of accession as natural, industrial (or artificial), and mixed. Numerous illustrations are given in the Institutes which may be arranged under the following heads:—(a) natural increment; (b) alluvion; (c) islands in rivers—river-beds; (d) building; (e) planting and sowing; (f) miscellaneous cases of artificial accession; (g) mixing of solids and liquids.

176. In the case of accession of a movable to a movable the question may be raised which is principal, which accessory. Usually the answer is obvious enough. If a hand is added to a mutilated statue, plainly the hand is accessory. But cases may be imagined in which the solution is not so simple. The Roman Law texts suggest various criteria. In one place it is said to be a question of appearance and the use to which the thing is reasonably put.<sup>64</sup> In other texts the mental picture which we form of a thing is made the test. This view, which has a distinguished pedigree, is adopted by Paulus in the following passage.<sup>65</sup>

“Proculus points out that we follow the rule which was approved by Servius and Labeo, viz. that if anything be added to substances in which a special characteristic is kept in view,<sup>66</sup> the addition is merged in the whole; as a foot or hand (joined on) to a statue, a base or handle to a cup, a leg to a couch, a plank to a ship, a stone to a building, for the whole belongs to him who was previously owner.”

If the accessory could be, and was, detached, so that it recovered its individual character, it reverted to its former owner, who in the meantime had an *actio ad exhibendum* to require it to be disannexed.<sup>67</sup> If this was impossible, he was reduced to claiming compensation by an *actio in factum*. Much

<sup>64</sup> Dig. 34. 2. 29, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 26 pr. (Walker's translation).

<sup>66</sup> In quibus propria qualitas expectaretur—“things with which what we look for is a thing answering some particular description” (Monro)—“objects which have a proper quality” (de Zulueta). In Dig. 6. 1. 23, 5. Paulus says that if you attach to my statue an arm taken from another statue the arm cannot be said to be yours “as the whole statue corresponds to one idea” (Monro)—*quia tota statua uno spiritu continetur*.

<sup>67</sup> Dig. 6. 1. 23, 5.

of this, it must be confessed, suggests rather class-room discussions than questions likely to occur in practice.

2. 1. 19. 177. (a) Natural increment. The owner of the female parent is owner of the offspring. Perhaps this is not so much a case of accession, as a continuation of the property which I already have in the parent animal. The same applies to the offspring of female slaves.<sup>68</sup> We may refer to the same head the natural produce of the vegetable kingdom.

2. 1. 20. 178. (b) Alluvio. This is defined as "latent increment". It takes place when a river-bank or an island in a river receives accessions of silt deposited by the water. The owner of the land is owner of the accessions. Alluvio does not apply to lands granted by the State and defined by an arbitrary boundary (*ager limitatus*), though this may more or less coincide with the line of the stream.

179. (c) Islands in rivers—river-beds. An island may come into existence in three ways :—(1) by the river dividing its channel and so enclosing a tract of land between its two arms; (2) if part of the river-bed is left dry, but so that the water flows on either side of it; (3) when an island forms on the water's surface.<sup>69</sup> In the first case there is no change of ownership. In the two other cases (which are indistinguishable) it is necessary to consider the position of the island in the stream and whether the riparian owners have or have not the right of alluvion.

2. 1. 22. 180. Justinian says that, if the island is in the middle of the river, it belongs to the riparian owners on the two sides. This implies (though the text does not make it plain) that a line is first drawn midway between the two banks (*per medium filum aquae*).<sup>70</sup> All of the island which falls on either side of the line is assigned to the owner or owners of the corresponding bank of the river, if more than one in proportion to their riparian frontage. All this supposes that they have the right of alluvion. If they have not, the island is *res nullius* and becomes the property of the first occupant.<sup>71</sup>

2. 1. 23. 181. If a river leaves its bed and flows in a new channel, the old bed accrues to the riparian owners in the same way as an island formed in the stream; the new channel becomes public like the river itself. If the river again shifts back to its old bed, the new bed in turn accedes to the proprietors on either bank. From which it follows that, if the whole of a man's land is absorbed in the new channel, he loses it altogether, because his field has ceased to

<sup>68</sup> Inst. 1. 3. 4.

<sup>70</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 56, 1.

<sup>69</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 30, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Dig. 43. 12. 1, 6.

exist, having lost its proper form, and he cannot claim any share in the bed, since he owns no property adjoining. So says Gaius, but he adds, "But it can scarcely be that this would be maintained".<sup>72</sup> The Institutes has nothing to say on the matter.

182. (d) Building (*inaedificatio*). Normally, if a man builds a house, he owns the land and owns, or has the disposal of, the material. But there are cases where this is not so. A may build on A's land with B's material; A may build on B's land with A's or C's material. In both cases the result is the same. The building goes with the land and is the property of the owner of the soil (*superficies solo cedit*), but there is no change in the ownership of the material.<sup>73</sup> While the building stands, however, the owner of the material may not require it to be disannexed. This was enacted by the Law of the Twelve Tables. If the building fell down the material might be reclaimed—a barren consolation. But the law allowed the owner an alternative, *viz.*, to sue for the value of the material. If the material was stolen the Twelve Tables gave him another remedy, the *actio de tigno injuncto*, a penal action for double damages, which seems to have been a variant of the *actio furti*. 2. 1. 29.

183. If a man builds upon land which he knows does not belong to him, *i.e.*, if he possesses in bad faith, the Institutes says that he loses the materials, because he is presumed to have parted with them by his own volition. It seems, however, that in the law of Justinian, if not before, he might prove that he had no such intention and recover the materials in the event of demolition.<sup>74</sup> Further, in the later law, anyone who had built on another's land, even knowing that it did not belong to him, might remove the building if he could do so without injury to the property (*jus tollendi*).<sup>75</sup> The builder was not in any event entitled to claim compensation by action, but a bona fide possessor might raise a plea of fraud against an owner seeking to recover his property, if he refused to indemnify him for his outlay, at least to the extent of the enhanced value of the land.<sup>76</sup> 2. 1. 30.

184. (e) Planting and sowing (*plantatio—satio*). See text, secs. 31, 32; *infra*, p. 140.

<sup>72</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 7, 5.

<sup>73</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 7, 10: non tamen ideo is qui materiae dominus fuit desinit ejus dominus esse. But Cod. 3. 32. 2, 1 says: sed et id quod in solo tuo aedificatum est, quoad in eadem causa manet, jure ad te pertinet. Si vero fuerit dissolutum, materia ejus ad pristinum dominium redit.

<sup>74</sup> Cod. 3. 32. 2, 1.

<sup>75</sup> Cod. 3. 32. 5, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Girard, p. 356.



(f) Miscellaneous cases of artificial accession. See text, secs. 26, 33, 34; *infra*, pp. 138<sup>76</sup>–9, 140–1.

- (g) Mixing of solids—of liquids (*commixtio—confusio*). For convenience this is treated in connection with *accessio*, though the legal consequences vary with the circumstances. If solids are mixed together there is, apart from agreement, no change of ownership. Plainly, if my sheep are mixed with yours they remain mine. In theory the case is the same if our grains of wheat are accidentally mixed. If you are in possession of the whole, my action will be a vindication to recover my property, not an action for division of property owned in common. Practically, however, what I shall get is either part of the mass of mixed grain or compensation for the value of the portion which belonged to me. If liquids are inseparably mixed so that one is absorbed in the other, it is a case of *accessio*; e.g., wine fortified with an admixture of brandy; the wine remains, the brandy disappears. If a new thing results from the mixture, it is a case of *specificatio* (see below). If both the components retain their character, e.g., wine mixed with wine, the whole, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, is owned in common in proportion to the value of the component parts. What is said of liquids applies equally to liquefied metals,<sup>77</sup> if fused together and inseparable.<sup>78</sup>

- 2 1 25 185. (3) *SPECIFICATIO*.—This is the name given to the process of bringing into existence a thing of a new kind (*nova species*) out of existing material, e.g., wine out of grapes, a ship out of timber, a goblet out of gold. If the creator of the “new species” was not the owner of the material, a question arose as to the ownership, upon which the Sabinians and the Proculians took different views. The Sabinians decided in favour of the owner of the material, because without the material the finished product could not have existed. The Proculians preferred the creator of the new species, a thing which previously had no existence and no owner.<sup>79</sup> Justinian gave authority to an intermediate opinion. If the product could be reduced to its original state, as e.g., a gold cup can be resolved into the original lump of metal, there was no change of ownership; in the contrary case the

<sup>77</sup> *Ut puta meum et tuum argentum in massam reductum est: erit nobis commune.* Dig. 6. 1. 3, 2; though here, too, Pomponius prescribes a *vindicatio pro rata ponderis*. But see Dig. 41. 1. 27, 1., where he says, quite truly: *nihil hic suum vere dicere potest prior dominus.*

<sup>78</sup> Bronze and silver were separable, so lead and silver; bronze and gold, not. Dig. 6. 1. 5, 1; 41. 1. 12, 1.

<sup>79</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 7, 7.

specificator became the owner. In this case, therefore, specification is a mode of acquisition. It comes near to, but is not quite the same as the occupatio of a *res nullius*. In fact there never is a *res nullius*, for from the very moment that the new thing exists it has an owner. Justinian's solution is no better than either of the others. They are all arbitrary and dogmatic. The French code (arts. 570, 571) more reasonably takes account of the relative value of the material and the work.

Modern authorities do not agree whether good faith on the part of the specifier was a necessary condition of acquisition by this method, *i.e.*, whether he must have believed that the material belonged to him.<sup>80</sup>

186. (4) PERCEPTION AND SEPARATION OF FRUITS.—The term "fruits" includes :—(a) the natural and periodic increment of the animal and vegetable kingdoms; (b) the produce of cultivated fields and gardens; (c) (by an extension) rents and similar profits derived from property.<sup>81</sup> These various kinds of "fruits" are distinguished by commentators as natural, industrial and civil. In the texts of the Roman Law attention is principally directed to the second of these, which was of most practical importance.

187. The rules relating to the ownership of fruits varied according to the nature of the right upon which the claim was based. The owner in possession of land was entitled to the fruits because he was entitled to the land. "Fruits on the tree are deemed to be part of the land",<sup>82</sup> and they continued to belong to the owner of the land after separation. This mode of acquisition, if it can be called so, has been mentioned above. But there were cases, now to be considered, in which the fruits vested in some one other than the owner of the land. The *emphyteuta* (§ 242) and the *bona fide* possessor of land became owners of the fruits as soon as they were separated from the parent tree (*fructuum separatio*), but the usufructuary not until he had gathered them (*fructuum perceptio*). A lessee of land (*conductor*) is said to become owner of the fruits by the will of the lessor (*locator*), which is interpreted as meaning by a kind of delivery, taking effect when the lessee gathers them.<sup>83</sup> From this it follows that if the lessor forbids him to gather them they do not become his, though he may have an action on the contract of hire.<sup>84</sup>

Though the *bona fide* possessor acquired the fruits by

<sup>80</sup> Girard, p. 343, thinks that good faith was necessary. *Contra* Buckl. *M.* p. 144.

<sup>82</sup> Dig. 6. 1. 44.

<sup>83</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 62, 8.

<sup>81</sup> Dig. 22. 1. 36.

<sup>84</sup> Dig. 39. 5. 6.

separation, if his title was challenged by the real owner of the property, he was accountable for fruits of which he was actually in possession at the time (*fructus exstantes*—*fructus non consumpti*). This rule, though in the Digest interpolated into texts of the classical jurists and in the Code into a constitution of Diocletian (A.D. 294) was “of much later origin, perhaps not much before Justinian.”<sup>85</sup>

The *mala fide* possessor was accountable for all fruits, gathered and consumed, gathered and unconsumed, and for fruits which should have been gathered but were not.<sup>86</sup>

2 1 40.

188. (5) *TRADITIO* (delivery).—This means transfer of possession with the consequence that the ownership of the thing transferred vests in the transferee. Since our concern is with Roman Law we may assume the parties to the transaction to be Roman citizens and the subject of the transaction to admit of Roman ownership. But it may be noted that, being a mode of acquisition *juris gentium*, it was in effect available to peregrines, though technically they could not become owner by *quiritary* title. It was also the normal method of giving a title to provincial land.

189. The essential conditions of this mode of acquisition are :—(a) The thing must admit of delivery, and of acquisition by delivery. This includes in general all corporeal things movable and immovable. It excludes incorporeal things, which do not admit of delivery<sup>87</sup> (but see below (§ 228) as to quasi-tradition of incorporeals); and it excluded, before Justinian, *res mancipi*, which could not be acquired by this method (§ 140); and, of course, things which could not be acquired by private individuals (*res extra commercium*, § 133), but that is common to all modes of acquisition.

190. (b) The transferor must be competent to give and the transferee to acquire ownership by this method. To say nothing of rules of capacity applicable to both parties, this means, normally, on the side of the transferor that he must be owner, or convey the property as agent for the owner, ratification being here as in other cases equivalent to antecedent authority. Sometimes a non-owner may convey, *e.g.*, a tutor in due course of administration may alienate the property of his ward (in the later law within narrow limits, § 123). On the other hand, there were cases in which an owner was incompetent to convey, *e.g.*, a husband, though technically owner, could not alienate *dotal* immovables.

2. § pr.

<sup>85</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 149.

<sup>86</sup> Inst. 2. 1. 35; 4. 17. 2. Cod. 3. 32. 22.

<sup>87</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 43, 1.

Gifts between husband and wife being prohibited, delivery by way of gift by the one to the other was ineffectual to convey the property (§ 201).

191. According to the Institutes, the Twelve Tables provided that the property in things sold and delivered did not pass unless the purchaser had paid the price to the vendor, or satisfied him in some other way, as by finding an expromissor (a third person who promised to pay), or giving a pledge.<sup>88</sup> The text goes on to say that the law of nature has the same effect, and adds (beyond what is attributed to the Twelve Tables) that if the vendor relies on the credit of the purchaser, the thing immediately becomes the purchaser's property. This passage has given rise to much controversy. Buckland says "the reference to the Twelve Tables is probably a misunderstanding".<sup>89</sup> Evidently so, if, as has been maintained, the rule was introduced into the law by Justinian himself some thousand years later, but this again is questioned. Whatever the source of the rule, it passed into the current of Roman Law, and makes law to-day for the Union of South Africa.<sup>90</sup>

192. (c) The transferor must intend to convey, the transferee must intend to acquire the ownership of the thing transferred. Such an intention exists when, and only when, tradition takes place for some just cause. The meaning of cause has been explained above in speaking of usucapion (§ 159).

"Mere tradition never transfers ownership, but only if sale or some just cause precedes, which supplies the motive for the tradition."<sup>91</sup>

But the cause need not, as usually in the case of usucapion (§ 159), have an objective existence. It is enough that it exists in the minds of the parties. They may suppose that there is an obligation to deliver the thing in question, when in fact there is not. Nevertheless the property passes. The transferor's remedy will be not vindication, but *condictio indebiti*, a personal action based upon the quasi-contractual duty to restore (§ 578), always supposing that the minds of the parties were directed to the same thing, and not to different things. The parties may even differ as to the supposed cause. You think it is gift. I intend sale. The property passes. You

<sup>88</sup> Inst. 2. 1. 41. There is no reference to the Twelve Tables in Dig. 18. 1. 19; 53, where the law is stated in similar terms.

<sup>89</sup> *Manual*, p. 137.

<sup>90</sup> Lee, p. 294. German law retains the principle that the property in things sold passes only on delivery, but without this qualification.

<sup>91</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 31 pr.

hand over money as a gift. I accept it as a loan.<sup>92</sup> The property passes. It would be otherwise if you handed over as a gift a thing not consumed by use, *e.g.*, a goblet; I accept it as a loan. The difference is that a loan of money makes me owner, the loan of a goblet does not. In the first case we both contemplate a transfer of ownership. In the second case we do not.

193. (d) The transferor cannot give what he has not got.

"Delivery ought not to transfer, and cannot transfer, to him who receives more than belongs to him who delivers. If, therefore, any one had the ownership of a field, he transfers it by delivery, but if he had it not, he transfers nothing to him who receives.

"Whenever ownership is transferred it passes to the transferee such as it was in the hands of the transferor: if the land was burdened, it passes subject to the servitudes: if free from burdens, it passes unburdened. and if servitudes were owed to the land which was transferred, it passes to the transferee together with the servitudes owed to it."<sup>93</sup>

194. (e) There must be a physical transfer of possession or something which in law is an equivalent. The old commentators distinguished tradition as real and fictitious. Real tradition means an actual handing over of the thing, so that possession and ownership are simultaneously transferred. The term "fictitious tradition" includes various cases which are a little out of the ordinary. There is in fact nothing fictitious about them. They are :—

- (i) *traditio brevi manu*;
- (ii) *constitutum possessorium*;
- (iii) *traditio longa manu*;
- (iv) so-called symbolical delivery.

2. 1 44 195. (i) *Traditio brevi manu*. This takes place when a person, who is already in possession, but not as owner, is to retain possession as owner; *e.g.*, I have lent you a thing for use, now I give it you. You retain it as owner *ex causa donationis*. I have deposited with you a sum of money, now I lend it to you. My intention coupled with yours converts deposit into *mutuum* and makes you owner.<sup>94</sup>

(ii) *Constitutum possessorium*. This is the opposite process. I am in possession as owner. I wish to make you a present of the thing, but to continue to have the use of it, for which I am willing to pay. I may without physical

<sup>92</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 36 (Julian); Dig. 12. 1. 18 pr. (Ulpian).

<sup>93</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 20.

<sup>94</sup> Dig. 12. 1. 9, 9.

transfer make it yours, remaining in possession as hirer, not as owner.<sup>95</sup>

(iii) *Traditio longa manu* takes place when I do not assume actual physical control, but in order to make a thing mine it is placed in my sight, or I am placed in sight of it so that I can take possession at pleasure.<sup>96</sup>

(iv) Symbolical tradition (so-called) takes place when, *e.g.*, the keys of a warehouse are handed over to me in the neighbourhood of the building (or not in the neighbourhood of the building?), by which act the building and its contents are deemed to pass into my possession. But there is nothing fictitious or symbolical about this process. Rather, the keys are handed over as the readiest means of placing the person to whom they are delivered in the exclusive control of the warehouse and its contents; for, as Savigny says, the handing over of keys (as the keys of city-gates) may be symbolic, but keys have another and more frequent use—to unlock doors.<sup>97</sup>

196. The above-mentioned cases of “fictitious tradition” were the germs of a development which culminated in the later Empire, when the delivery of a written deed of conveyance took the place of the delivery of the land. This was the *traditio per cartam*, which persisted into and through the Middle Ages. Sometimes even this was dispensed with. A recital that delivery had taken place served the same purpose. Contemporaneously, the practice grew up of registering transfers of land in the appropriate office (*insinuatio apud acta*).<sup>98</sup>

197. *THESAURUS* (treasure).—Paulus describes this as 2. 1. 39. “an ancient deposit of money, of which no memory exists, so that it has no present owner”.<sup>99</sup>

This is not quite satisfactory. Treasure is not a *res derelicta*. There has been no abandonment of ownership. Nor is treasure confined to money.

There are three possible claimants:—1, the owner of the soil (or of the movable<sup>100</sup> ?) in which the treasure is found; 2, the finder; 3, the *fiscus* (always ready to pick up anything that is going). The Institutes attributes to Hadrian the decision that if a man found treasure on his own land he might keep it; if he found it by accident, not by deliberate

<sup>95</sup> Dig. 6. 1. 77; 41. 2. 18 pr.

<sup>96</sup> Dig. 46. 3. 79; 41. 2. 1, 21; 18, 2.

<sup>97</sup> *Das Recht des Besitzes*, § 16.

<sup>98</sup> Arangio-Ruiz, p. 190.

<sup>99</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 31, 1.

<sup>100</sup> There is no authority. See Sir George Hill, *Treasure Trove in Law and Practice*, p. 8. For English law see *Att.-Gen. v. Trustees of the British Museum*, [1903] 2 Ch. 598.

channel and takes a different course, the old bed belongs to the riparian owners in proportion to their frontage on the river; the new channel acquires the legal character of the river, that is to say, it becomes public. If after some time the river resumes its old course, the new channel (now again dry) belongs to the riparian owners. 24. The case is different if a man's whole land is flooded, for flooding does not change the character of the land, and, therefore, if the water retires, it is plain that the land belongs to the same person as before.

§ 185.

25. When a man makes a thing from another person's materials the question is asked which of them is by natural reason owner. Is it the man who made it or the owner of the material? For example, suppose a man has made wine or oil or grain out of another man's grapes or olives or ears of corn, or has made some kind of vessel out of another man's gold or silver or bronze, or made mead by mixing another man's wine and honey, or compounded a plaster or eye-salve out of another man's drugs, or made a garment out of another man's wool, or a ship or chest or chair out of another man's timber. After prolonged controversy between the Sabinians and the Proculians the law has been settled in accordance with the intermediate opinion, namely, that, if the finished product can be reduced to its original material, it belongs to the owner of the material; if not, then the maker is preferred. For example, a vessel can by melting be reduced to a shapeless mass of bronze, silver or gold; but wine, oil or grain cannot be reconverted into grapes, olives or ears of corn, nor mead resolved into its original components of wine and honey. If a person has made a new thing partly from his own material, partly from some other person's material, for example, mead from his own wine and somebody else's honey, or a plaster or eye-salve from drugs which partly belong to him and partly to some one else, or a garment from wool partly his own and partly another's, there can be no doubt that in this case the maker is owner, because he has not only put his own work into it, but supplied, as well, part of the material.<sup>2</sup> 26. If a man has woven into his own garment another man's purple yarn, although the purple is the more valuable, it accedes to the garment, and the original owner of the purple [if it was stolen] has an action of theft against the thief, and a personal action (*condictio*), whether the man who stole it was the man who made up the garment or some one else. For though a thing which has ceased to exist [as in this case the purple] cannot be vindicated, a *condiction* lies against thieves and some other possessors.<sup>3</sup> 27. If

<sup>2</sup> This sentence seems to continue a discussion which has been replaced by Justinian's own solution. It is not meant to qualify it, nor, in fact, does it do so. If the thing is reducible, there is no change of ownership. If it is irreducible, the specifier is owner in any event.

<sup>3</sup> This is understood to mean *mala fide* possessors, who would usually, but not necessarily, be themselves thieves (*contractatio fraudulosa*). Against *b.f.* possessors there would be a *condictio sine causa*, or an *actio in factum* (Dig. 6. 1. 23, 5). The substantial difference was the measure of damages. *Fur semper in mora est*. If the defendant was a *mala fide* possessor, even if not technically a fur, he was treated as such. This is, in

materials belonging to two persons are mixed with the consent of the owners the resulting whole belongs to them in common <sup>4</sup>; for instance, if wines have been mixed or lumps of silver or gold melted together. If the materials are of different kinds, and therefore a new kind of thing results from the mixing, for example, mead from wine and honey or electrum from gold and silver, the rule is the same, for in this case too there is no doubt that the resulting thing is owned in common. If things are mixed by accident and not by consent the same consequence follows, whether the materials are different or of the same kind.<sup>5</sup> 28. But, if grain belonging to Titius is mixed with yours, then, if the mixture was made by consent, the whole is owned in common, because the single bodies or grains, which were the separate property of each, are now owned in common by mutual consent. But, if the mixture took place by accident, or was effected by Titius without your consent, the resulting whole is not owned in common, because the single grains retain their original character, and in such cases the grain in bulk is no more owned in common than a flock or herd would be, if beasts belonging to Titius were mixed with yours; but if one or other of you keeps all the grain, the other may bring a real action to recover his rateable share, and it lies in the discretion of the judge to estimate the quality of each parcel of grain.

29 When a man builds on his own soil with another man's material, he is understood to be owner of the building, because everything which is built upon the soil goes with it. However, the owner of the material continues to be owner, though meanwhile he can neither vindicate it nor bring an action to have it produced (*actio ad exhibendum*) on account of the Law of the Twelve Tables, which provides that no one may be compelled to detach another person's *tignum* which has been built into his house, but may be sued for the double value in an action called the *actio de tigno juncto*. The word *tignum* means any building material. The object of the provision is to avoid the necessity of buildings being pulled down. But, if from any cause the building has been demolished, the owner of the material, if he has not recovered the double damages, may vindicate it and bring an action for its production.<sup>6</sup> 30. Conversely, if a man has built a house with his own material on another man's land, the house belongs to the owner of the soil. But in this case the owner of the material loses his right of owner-

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effect, what Theophilus says in his Greek paraphrase of the Institutes, *ad hunc loc*. Another view is that the text means that a *condictio furtiva* lies against the thief and some other kind of *condictio* against "some other possessors." Many of the older commentators replaced *quibusdam* (some) by *quibusque* (any).

<sup>4</sup> This section relates to liquids and things which are mixed by liquefaction. The following section relates to mixture of solids. These are commonly (not by the Romans) distinguished as *confusio* and *commixtio*.

<sup>5</sup> i.e., provided the things are inseparable. Dig. 6 1 5 1.

<sup>6</sup> Scarcely, the *actio de tigno (in)juncto* did not lie unless the material had been stolen by someone (*tignum furtivum*, Dig. 47 3 1), but could be brought against a builder who had used the material in good faith. If he paid the penalty (so the text says) he might keep the material.



ship, because he is taken to have parted with it voluntarily, provided that he knew that he was building on another's land; therefore, even if the house is demolished, he will not be able to vindicate the material. To be sure, if the builder is in possession, and the owner of the soil sues for the recovery of his house, and does not pay the price of the material and the wages of the workmen, he may be repelled by the exception of fraud (*exceptio doli mali*), provided that the builder possessed in good faith; if the builder knew that the land belonged to some one else, he may be blamed for thoughtlessly building on land which he knew did not belong to him. 31. If Titius has planted another man's shrub in his own soil, the shrub is his; conversely, if Titius has planted his own shrub in soil belonging to Maevius, the shrub will belong to Maevius, provided in each case that it has struck root; until it has done so, there is no change of ownership. The principle that when a shrub has struck root there is a change of ownership is carried so far that if soil from land belonging to Titius has pressed against a neighbour's tree so that it drives its roots into Titius' land,<sup>7</sup> the tree becomes the property of Titius; for reason does not suffer a tree to belong to any other person than the person in whose soil it is rooted. Consequently, if a tree is planted near a boundary and drives its roots into the neighbour's land as well, it belongs to both proprietors. 32. The principle that shrubs rooted in a man's land go with the soil, applies also to the sowing of grain. But the *exceptio doli*, which, as explained above, may be pleaded by the builder, if the owner claims the building, is equally available to one who at his own charge has in good faith sown in another man's land. 33. Written characters again, though they be of gold, accede to the paper or parchment on which they are written, just as buildings and crops are an accessory of the soil. Accordingly, if Titius has written a poem or a history or an oration on your paper or parchment, you are considered to be the owner, Titius not. But if you claim the books or parchment as being your property, and are not prepared to pay the cost of the writing, Titius may plead the exception of fraud, provided that he got possession of the papers or parchments in good faith.

G. 2. 78

34. If a man has painted a picture on another man's canvas, some think that the canvas is an accessory of the picture; others maintain that a picture, whatever its value, is an accessory of the canvas.<sup>8</sup> But we think it better that the canvas should be an accessory of the picture; for it is absurd that a picture by Apelles or Parrhasius<sup>9</sup> should accede to a canvas of little value. Accordingly, if the original owner of the canvas is in possession of the painting and the artist claims it, but does not pay for the canvas, he may be repelled by the plea of fraud. If the artist is in

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps in consequence of a landslide. But the Digest (41. 1. 7, 13) has *si vicini arborem terra presserim*—if I have heaped soil about my neighbour's tree. *Qu.* read "*presserit*"?

<sup>8</sup> So Paulus, Dig. 6. 1. 23, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Celebrated Greek painters. Apelles was Court painter to Alexander the Great, who died B.C. 323. Parrhasius lived about a hundred years earlier.

possession, it follows that the original owner of the canvas has a *utilis actio*,<sup>10</sup> and if he does not pay the cost of the picture, he may be met with the plea of fraud, provided that the painter possessed the canvas in good faith. It is evident that if the canvas was stolen by the painter or by any one else, the owner of the canvas has the action of theft.<sup>11</sup>

35. If any one has in good faith bought land from one who was not its owner, believing him to be owner, or equally in good faith acquired it by way of gift or for any other just cause, it has been decided, as natural reason requires, that the fruits which he has gathered should be his to reward the trouble he has taken in cultivating the land.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, if the real owner of the land afterwards appears and claims his property, he cannot recover the value of fruits which the possessor has consumed. But the same indulgence is not extended to one who knows that he is in possession of another man's property. Accordingly he has to give up the land and is accountable for fruits even though consumed. § 187.

36. A usufructuary of land does not become owner of the fruits until he has gathered them. If he dies when fruits are ripe for gathering, but have not yet been gathered, they do not belong to his heirs, but go to the owner of the soil. The case of a lessee of land is similar.<sup>13</sup> § 187.

37. In the case of animals the term "fruits" includes their young, milk, hair and wool; consequently lambs and kids and calves and foals immediately on birth are by natural law the property of the usufructuary. The offspring of a slave-woman is not included under the term "fruits" and therefore belongs to the owner of the woman, not to the usufructuary; for it was considered ridiculous that a human being should be included amongst fruits, when nature has provided all fruits for the use of man. 38. If any one has the usufruct of a flock he must make good losses by death from additions by birth—so Julian held—and must replace dead vines and trees. For every one must show proper husbandry and use the property as befits a good father of a family. § 233.

39. If a man found treasure on his own land the Emperor Hadrian in accordance with natural equity allowed the finder to keep it, and he gave the same decision, in case any one found treasure by chance in a place sacred or religious. But if one found treasure on another man's land not by looking for it, but fortuitously, he allowed half of it to the owner of the soil. Consis- § 197.

<sup>10</sup> *Utilis actio* (§ 682): in which the *iudex* was instructed to treat him as still owner of the canvas. If the painter was out of possession he could recover the picture or its value on the condition of paying for the canvas. If he was in possession he could retain possession on the same condition. The original owner would merely recover his interest, namely the value of the canvas.

<sup>11</sup> All of this follows Gaius (2. 78), who is also cited to the same effect in Dig. 41. 1. 9, 2.

<sup>12</sup> This must not be understood to mean that his right to fruits is limited to those which are the result of his own efforts. Dig. 41. 1. 48 pr. (Paulus).

<sup>13</sup> Neither of them is owner of hanging fruits.

tently with this, he decided that if treasure was found on land belonging to the Emperor,<sup>14</sup> half was to go to the finder, half<sup>15</sup> to the Emperor; if found in a place which is public or belongs to the *fiscus*, half goes to the finder, half to the *fiscus*, or to the city.<sup>16</sup>

188. 40. Tradition or Delivery is another way in which things are acquired by natural law; for nothing is more in accord with natural equity than to give effect to an owner's intention, when he wishes to make his property over to some one else. Therefore, every kind of corporeal thing may be transferred by its owner and so alienated. Stipendiary and tributary lands (that is lands situated in the provinces) are alienated by this method.<sup>17</sup> However, by our constitution<sup>18</sup> there is no difference between provincial and Italian lands. 41. If things are delivered by way of gift or *dos* or for any other cause, the property undoubtedly passes. But things sold and delivered do not vest in the purchaser unless he has paid the price or satisfied the vendor in some other way as by getting some one else to promise payment<sup>19</sup> or by giving a real security. This is so provided by the Law of the Twelve Tables, but it is truly said that the *jus gentium*, in other words natural law, has the same effect; and if the vendor gives credit to the purchaser, it must be allowed that the property immediately passes to him. 42. It makes no difference whether the thing is delivered by the owner himself, or by some one else with his consent. 43. Consequently, if the owner entrusts some one with the general management of his affairs, and such person sells and delivers something in the course of business, the property vests in the transferee.
191. 44. Sometimes, without delivery, the owner's mere intention is enough to pass the ownership; for example, if some one has placed a thing in your hands by way of loan, or hire, or deposit, and then sells it or gives it to you. For though there is no delivery consequent upon the sale or gift, yet from the mere fact that he allows you to keep it, it becomes yours just as if there had been an actual delivery on that account.
- 195.

<sup>14</sup> His private domain.

<sup>15</sup> In this context *publicus locus* seems to mean *civitas*.

<sup>16</sup> Somewhat inconsistent legislation of the *divi fratres* (Marcus Aurelius and Verus) is recorded in Dig. 49. 14. 3, 10. Buckl. M. p. 145.

<sup>17</sup> Under the Principate provinces were distinguished as senatorial and imperial. The first—the older provinces—were administered by proconsuls appointed by the Senate. The second—the frontier provinces—were administered by *legati Caesaris*. The tax imposed upon the first was called *stipendium*, that paid by the second *tributum*. Hence the distinction in the text: Gaius notices, but evidently without entirely endorsing ("intelliguntur"—"creduntur") a current view that the first were owned by the Roman People (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1. 2, uses the phrase "*imperium* of the Senate and the People"), the second by the Emperor; which comes to much the same as the doctrine of English Law that "every acre of land is technically held of the Crown" (Cheshire, *The Modern Law of Real Property* (4) p. 72). See A. H. M. Jones in *The Journal of Roman Studies* (1941), vol. 31, p. 26).

<sup>18</sup> Cod. 7. 31. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Either as *surety*, or by *novation*, or in any other way. *Expromittere* means to undertake to pay an existing debt. Buckl. *Textb.* p. 570.

45. If a person sells merchandise lying in a warehouse, as soon as he hands over the keys of the warehouse to the purchaser, he makes him owner of the goods.

46. Further, it sometimes happens that an owner's intention to benefit an indeterminate person passes the property; for example, praetors or consuls who throw largesse to a crowd do not know what any individual is going to get, and yet, since they intend that each man should keep what he gets, they make him owner as soon as he gets it. 47. On this principle<sup>20</sup> the better view seems to be that if the owner of a thing has abandoned it, and some one else takes possession of it, it immediately becomes his. A thing is said to be abandoned when an owner throws it away with the intention of being rid of it with the consequence that he immediately ceases to be owner.

48. The case is different when, during a storm at sea, things are thrown overboard to lighten the ship. Such things continue to belong to their owners, for it is obvious that they are thrown away not to be rid of them but in order that the owner and the ship may escape the peril of the sea. Accordingly, if any one with a view to his own profit appropriates such things when they are cast ashore by the waves or found floating in the sea, he commits theft. The case is much the same as that of things which fall from a carriage in motion unknown to the owner.

## V. DONATION OR GIFT

198. Donation or Gift is an act of liberality which enriches the donee at the expense of the donor. The word covers a number of different transactions, which, if made for value and not gratuitously, are recognised as having each its own special character. Thus, I may give by transferring the ownership in a thing, or by creating or extinguishing a servitude, or by incurring or discharging an obligation and in other ways.<sup>21</sup>

Justinian describes donation as a mode of acquisition, and there are "one or two cases under his legislation" to which this description is fairly applicable,<sup>22</sup> but, in general, a gift may more properly be described, not as a mode, but as a cause or title, of acquisition (§ 159).

Gifts are distinguished as 1, gifts *inter vivos*; 2, gifts *mortis causa*.

When a gift, which is the most frequent case, takes the form of a transfer of ownership, it is usually effected by

<sup>20</sup> But the principle is not the same, because Justinian rejects the Proculian view that ownership of a *res derelicta* was not lost until another person took possession. Dig. 41. 7. 2, 1. He seems to hint at another view, namely, that the possessor's title was not perfect until usucapion.

<sup>21</sup> Girard, p. 992.

<sup>22</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 150.

tradition. In Justinian's system a promise to give was enforceable as a vested pact (§ 514), which placed upon the donor a duty to deliver.

199. *DONATIO INTER VIVOS*.—Gifts were the subject of special rules relating to:—(a) the amount; (b) the persons to whom they might be made; (c) the circumstances in which they might be revoked.

200. (a) Amount. A *lex Cincia*, a plebiscite of B.C. 204, prohibited gifts in excess of a certain (unknown) amount except in favour of a wide circle of relatives and some other privileged persons.<sup>23</sup> This law was a *lex imperfecta*,<sup>24</sup> i.e., it did not render the prohibited gift invalid, or even penalise it. The praetor gave effect to it by allowing an *exceptio legis Cinciae*, which might be pleaded by the donor (not by his heirs) if the donee claimed the gift in Court.<sup>24a</sup>

The *lex Cincia* had fallen into disuse before the time of Justinian and was replaced by legislation requiring registration in Court of gifts in excess of 200, or, as Justinian enacted, 500 *solidi*. An unregistered gift in excess of this amount was void to the extent of the excess.

201. (b) Persons. The chief restriction under this head was the prohibition of gifts between husband and wife. Such gifts were in general void,<sup>25</sup> but by an oratio of Antoninus (Caracalla) of A.D. 206 became valid if the donee survived the donor (the marriage not dissolved by divorce) and the donor at the time of death wished the gift to take effect.<sup>26</sup>

202. (c) Revocation. In the classical period gifts made by patrons to freedmen were revocable at discretion.<sup>27</sup> Under Justinian all gifts might be revoked on the ground of serious acts of ingratitude on the part of the donee<sup>28</sup>; and gifts by patrons to freedmen also on the ground of birth of issue to the donor, he being childless at the time of the gift.<sup>29</sup>

If a gift was made with a limitation or charge annexed to it (*donatio sub modo*) to which the donee failed to give effect, the gift might be recalled.<sup>30</sup>

203. Another peculiarity of donations (though not of donations alone) was the so-called *beneficium competentiae*,

<sup>23</sup> *Vat.* 298.

<sup>24</sup> Ulpian, *Regulae—ad init.*—as reconstructed.

<sup>24a</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 255; *M.* p. 152; e.g., by vindication from a donor who had resumed possession. There would, of course, be no action on the gift before Justinian, unless it took the form of a stipulation.

<sup>25</sup> With some exceptions, in particular gifts *mortis causa*. Ulp. VII. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Dig.* 24. 1. 32.

<sup>27</sup> *Vat.* 272.

<sup>28</sup> *Inst.* 2. 7. 2; *Cod.* 8. 55 (56). 10.

<sup>29</sup> *Cod.* 8. 55 (56). 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Cod.* 4. 6. 3; 8. 54 (55).

which the donor might plead if sued upon his promise to give. The purpose was to prevent the donor being ruined by his own generosity and also to protect his creditors. The debtor was to be left enough to supply his necessary maintenance after deduction of his debts.<sup>31</sup> The donee could only enforce the gift subject to these prior claims.

204. *DONATIO MORTIS CAUSA*.—This was a gift made in contemplation of death either generally or in view of a particular illness or hazard. It failed to take effect if the donor survived the donee (If they died simultaneously the gift held good),<sup>32</sup> and was subject to an unrestricted power of revocation *inter vivos* or by last will, which, however, might be expressly renounced. The condition of the gift, *viz.*, predecease or simultaneous decease of the donor, might be expressed to operate either as a condition precedent (suspensive) or as a condition subsequent (resolutive). In the first case the property did not pass, unless and until the condition was realised. In the second case it passed immediately but might be reclaimed (or reverted) if the condition was not realised.

205. Justinian says that gifts *mortis causa* have in all respects been assimilated to legacies. This requires some qualification. A legacy implies a will and acceptance of the inheritance by an instituted heir. Neither of these things is necessary to a gift *mortis causa*, and there were other differences. On the other hand, there were close resemblances. Both took effect in consequence of death. In general, persons who could not make or take a legacy could not make or take a gift *mortis causa*. Both were postponed to the claims of creditors. Both were revocable. The provision of the *lex Falcidia* (§ 343) permitting the heir to retain one fourth against legatees was extended by Septimius Severus to *donationes mortis causa*.<sup>33</sup> 2. 7 1

206. So far as concerns form, a gift *mortis causa* could be constituted by any method appropriate to a corresponding gift *inter vivos*. By a constitution of A.D. 530, Justinian enacted that if a *donatio mortis causa* was made, in writing or without writing, in the presence of five witnesses, the number required for a codicil, registration and the usual notarial formalities were unnecessary.<sup>34</sup> It would be a

<sup>31</sup> Dig. 42. 1. 19, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Dig. 39. 6. 26; *quia neuter alteri supervixit*.

<sup>33</sup> Cod. 8. 56. 2, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Cod. 8. 56 (57). 4.

mistake to regard this as laying down a general requirement of form for all gifts *mortis causa*.

2. 7. 3. 207. **DONATIO PROPTER NUPTIAS.**—A special case of gift *inter vivos* was the *donatio ante* or *propter nuptias*. This was a provision made by the husband for the benefit of the wife to take effect in the event of her surviving him, or being divorced without fault of her own. The institution, which was of oriental origin, developed in the later Empire. Originally, the gift was made before marriage, but Justinian's predecessor Justin having permitted the gift to be increased after marriage, Justinian changed the name from *donatio ante nuptias* to *donatio propter nuptias*, and allowed such gifts to be made before and after marriage indifferently. Most frequently no property was actually transferred by the husband to the wife. He merely bound himself by contract to make the gift, and this promise was enforceable against himself in case of divorce, and against his heirs in case of his predecease. In Justinian's system the *donatio propter nuptias* was closely assimilated to the *dos*, of which we are next to speak.

## VI. Dos

208. *Dos* was a gift made to the husband on the part of the wife as her contribution towards the expenses of the joint establishment. It was made by the wife or by another person on her behalf, usually before marriage and conditionally on the marriage taking place; but it might also be made or increased after marriage. If the *dos* was furnished by the wife's father or paternal ancestor it was called *dos profecticia*; if by the wife or any one else, *dos adventicia*; if on the express condition that it was to revert on the dissolution of the marriage, *dos recepticia*.<sup>35</sup>

209. Ulpian says that a *dos* may be constituted in three ways: "A *dos* is either given, or declared or promised."<sup>36</sup> These methods are distinguished as *dotis datio*, *dotis dictio*, *dotis promissio*. *Dotis datio* includes any mode of conveyance which vested the property in the husband. *Dotis dictio* was a verbal contract distinct from the stipulation (§ 428) applicable only in special circumstances. *Dotis promissio* was a promise to constitute a *dos*, made exclusively by way of stipulation until a constitution of Theodosius II and Valentinian III of A.D. 428 gave the same effect to an informal agreement (*pactum de constituenda dote*, § 514).

<sup>35</sup> Ulp. VI, 3 and 5.

<sup>36</sup> Ulp. VI, 1.

The above enumeration is not exhaustive. Any act of donation might be made to serve the same purpose. The amount of the dos and other particulars were usually settled by a written instrument executed before or after<sup>37</sup> marriage (*instrumentum dotale*).

210. In the course of its long history the legal incidents of dos were profoundly changed. We may distinguish three periods—the pre-classical—the classical—and the epoch of Justinian.<sup>38</sup>

211. (1) Pre-classical period. If the woman was *sui juris* and married in *manum* everything that belonged to her vested automatically in her husband and was absorbed in his estate. The constitution of a dos, to the extent of the property composed in it, procured the same result. It was a provision made in the case of a *manus* marriage of a daughter in power by the wife's father; in the case of a free marriage, by the wife's father, or by herself, according as she was of dependent or independent status. Once vested in the husband, the dos remained his for all purposes and for all time. He was not accountable for it. It never reverted (unless it was *dos recepticia*, in which case the terms of restitution were determined in advance).

212. (2) The classical period. Divorces, and therefore second marriages, became increasingly frequent in the later Republic (§ 91). Correspondingly, the idea gained ground that the woman ought to have her dos back when the marriage was dissolved by divorce<sup>39</sup> or by the husband's death. This result was secured by stipulation (*cautio rei uxoriae*), defining the terms of restitution, enforced by the appropriate action (*actio ex stipulatu*). In the absence of stipulation, the lady was given another action (*actio rei uxoriae*), which enabled her to reclaim not the whole dos, but an equitable portion of it (*quod aequius melius est*), and in this action the husband was not condemned beyond his ability to pay.<sup>40</sup> In case of the wife's predecease the dos could not be reclaimed, the *actio rei uxoriae* not being transmissible to heirs. An exception was admitted with regard to *dos profecticia*, which reverted to the father if alive; otherwise, remained with the husband.<sup>41</sup> In principle, the husband was always owner of

<sup>37</sup> Inst. 2. 7. 3 *ad fin.*

<sup>38</sup> Girard, p. 1008 ff.; Buckl. T. p. 107; M. p. 64.

<sup>39</sup> Ulp. VI, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Inst. 4. 6. 37; Cod. 6. 13. 17. The so-called *beneficium competentiae* § 208 (donation), § 496 (*societas*), § 737 (*cessio bonorum*).

<sup>41</sup> Ulp. VI, 4.



the dos, but, in the cases specified, subject to a duty of restitution. This was further emphasised by a provision of the *lex Julia de fundo dotali* (part of the *lex Julia de adulteriis*) of B.C. 18, which prohibited the alienation of a dotal immovable in Italy without the consent of the wife, and (as interpreted) its hypothecation even with such consent. In the cases in which the law required the husband to restore the dos to the wife, he was entitled to retain part of it on various grounds—*propter liberos* (one sixth for each child, when the marriage was determined by divorce due to the fault of the wife or of her *paterfamilias*, but not more than three-sixths in all)—*propter mores* (one-sixth, if the wife was guilty of adultery, one-eighth for minor faults)—*propter impensas* (for necessary expenses).<sup>42</sup>

213. (3) Justinian's legislation. Justinian by a constitution of 531 further limited the husband's power of disposition by prohibiting the alienation or hypothecation of dotal immovables wherever situated even with the consent of the wife. By the same constitution he fused the *actio rei uxoriae* and the *actio ex stipulatu*, abolishing the name of the former, but retaining most of its advantages. The reformed action was known as an *actio ex stipulatu*; not very happily, because it was available where there was no stipulation in fact, and, contrary to the nature of the *actio ex stipulatu*, was a *bonae fidei iudicium* like the old *actio rei uxoriae*, but unlike it was transmissible to the woman's heirs. It was also known as *actio de dote*. The wife was given a tacit hypothec (§ 249) over all her husband's property to secure the restoration of the dos, and the husband had a similar hypothec over the property of the wife or her relations to ensure the dos being assigned to him in terms of the marriage contract.<sup>43</sup> The husband was liable to make compensation, if dotal property had been alienated without his wife's consent, or damaged through his failure to take as good care of it as he would of his own. The retentions of the classical age were gone, but the dos was *ipso jure* reduced to the extent of necessary expenses, and useful expenses could usually be recovered in an *actio mandati* or *negotiorum gestorum*.<sup>44</sup>

If, as often happened, movables were made over to the husband at a valuation (*dos aestimata*), the husband was liable for the estimated value, and not for the specific objects. He was answerable, whatever happened to the property. The general result of Justinian's legislation was that the dos

<sup>42</sup> Ulp. VI, 9.

<sup>43</sup> Cod. 8. 17 (18). 12; Girard, p. 1023.

<sup>44</sup> Girard, p. 1022, n. 2.

always reverted to the donor or to the wife or her heirs, except that if the wife had been divorced for a permitted cause or had divorced her husband not for a permitted cause she forfeited the dos for the benefit of the husband, or of the husband and the children.<sup>45</sup> Through all this long course of development the husband was at first substantially and always formally owner of the dos.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK 11

## TITLE VII

*Of donations*

There is another kind of acquisition, donation. § 198.

There are two kinds of donation, *mortis causa* and *inter vivos*.

1. *Donatio mortis causa* is a gift made in anticipation of death, § 204. when a person gives on the terms that, in the event of his death, the donee is to have what is given, but that the donor is to get it back in the event of his survival, or if he repents of the gift, or if the donee dies first. These gifts *mortis causa* have been assimilated in § 205. all respects to legacies. It was a matter of controversy amongst the jurists whether they were to be regarded as gifts or as legacies, for they have resemblances with both, some taking the one view, some the other. By our constitution<sup>46</sup> they are to be reckoned as legacies practically in all respects and are to conform to the directions therein laid down. In a word, a gift is said to be *mortis causa* when the giver would rather keep it himself than have it go to the donee, and wishes the donee to have it rather than his heir. So in Homer *Telemachus* is described as giving to *Peiraeus*.

"*Peiraeus*, we cannot yet see how things will go. If the suitors manage to kill me traitorously in the palace and split up my heritage, I would rather you held these gifts. But if I succeed in dooming them to death, then shall I be just as glad to get them as you to let them go."

2. There are other gifts, which are made without any thought of death, and which we call gifts *inter vivos*. These have no resemblance to legacies and once perfected cannot be lightly revoked. They are perfected when the donor has manifested his intention with or without writing; and our constitution<sup>48</sup> ordains that, as in the case of sale, the promise implies a duty to deliver, so that even before delivery, it is fully and perfectly binding, and places on the donor a duty of delivery. Former imperial enactments required that gifts in excess of two hundred *solidi* should be lodged in an official § 198.

<sup>45</sup> Nov. 117. 8 and 9.

<sup>46</sup> Cod. 8. 56. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Od. XVII, 78—83.

<sup>48</sup> Cod. 8. 53. 35, 5b.

registry. By our constitution<sup>49</sup> the limit is raised to five hundred solidi; gifts up to that amount are valid without registration, and there are special cases in which gifts are perfectly valid (to any amount) without registration. Other provisions designed to secure to gifts their full effect will be found in our constitutions. It must be observed, however, that, even when gifts are quite complete, our constitution<sup>50</sup> allows donors, if the donees prove ungrateful, to revoke them for certain specified reasons, lest otherwise their generosity should be an occasion of injury or loss. 3. There is another kind of gift *inter vivos*, unknown to the older lawyers, but introduced by the Emperors in modern times. This is the type of gift which used to be known as *donatio ante nuptias*, so called because it was concluded before (never after) marriage and was conditional on marriage taking place. Our father, the late Emperor Justin, having regard to the fact that it was lawful to increase the amount of the *dos* after marriage, allowed, in the event of this being done, a corresponding increase to be made in the *donatio ante nuptias*. The consequence was to render the name "gift before marriage" inappropriate, now that the gift could be increased after marriage. Accordingly, since it is our desire that laws should be carried to their logical conclusion, and that names should correspond with facts, we have changed the name from *donatio ante nuptias* to *donatio propter nuptias*, and ordained that like the *dos* this gift may be not only increased, but also constituted after marriage.

4. Formerly there was another mode of acquisition by civil law, namely, by right of accrual (*per jus adcrescendi*). This took place in the following circumstances. Suppose a man, who owned a slave in common with Titius, acting alone gave him his freedom by *vindicta* or by testament; the consequence was that his share in the slave was gone and accrued to Titius, the other co-owner. This was open to the gravest objection. The slave was cheated out of his freedom and kind masters suffered a loss, while masters who were not so kind reaped an advantage. Our constitution provides a remedy which favours freedom, gives effect to the benevolent intention of the manumitting master, and indemnifies the other.<sup>51</sup>

## VII. COMPETENCE TO ALIENATE

214. In Title VIII Justinian considers some exceptional cases in which owners may not alienate their own property, or persons who are not owners may alienate the property of some one else.

Under the first head fall the cases of:—

2. § pr. (1) the husband, forbidden to alienate dotal immovables (§ 212);

<sup>49</sup> Cod. 8. 53. 36, 3.

<sup>50</sup> Cod. 8. 55. 10.

<sup>51</sup> The slave was free. The manumitting master had to compensate the other.

(2) the pupillus incapable of alienating any property whatever without the authority of his tutor (§ 120). 2. 8. 2.

There were many other cases. In the older law, a woman of any age could not alienate *res mancipi* without her tutor's authority. In the later Empire minors who had a curator were assimilated to pupils and could not alienate without the curator's consent. Insane persons and interdicted prodigals laboured under a general incapacity to act for themselves. G. 2. 80.

215. As an instance of a non-owner competent to alienate, the case of the mortgagee is mentioned, who was empowered to sell the pledge in order to realise his security. This right was not limited, as the text seems to imply, to the case where a right of sale was a term in the contract. As early as Ulpian it might be exercised without any agreement in that behalf, in the absence of express agreement to the contrary <sup>52</sup> (§ 246). 2. 8. 1.

In addition to the above Justinian might have mentioned the case of tutors and curators who (within limits) have power to alienate the property under their control (§ 123).

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II

#### TITLE VIII

##### *Of persons who may, and who may not alienate*

It sometimes happens that an owner cannot alienate, and conversely one who is not owner has the power of alienation. Thus the *lex Julia* forbids a husband to alienate dotal immovables, if his wife does not consent, though the property is his, having been given him by way of *dos*. This law we have changed and amended. The *lex Julia* has reference only to Italian immovables, and while it prohibits alienation without the wife's consent, prohibits hypothecation even with her consent. In respect of both these matters we have contrived a remedy. The prohibition of alienation and pledge is extended to provincial soil,<sup>53</sup> and neither is allowed even with the woman's consent, lest the frailty of the sex should be the occasion of a woman's financial ruin. 1. On the other hand a creditor may by agreement alienate a pledge, though the thing does not belong to him. But this may be thought to take place with the consent of the debtor who agreed from the beginning that the creditor might sell the pledge, if the debt was not paid. Our constitution<sup>54</sup> prescribes a procedure for realising pledges, which fully safeguards the interests of both parties. §§ 212, 213.

2. It must be observed that no pupil of either sex can alienate any property without the tutor's authority. Accordingly, if a pupil lends money without the tutor's authority no obligation is contracted, § 246. § 120.

<sup>52</sup> Dig. 13. 7. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Cod. 5. 13.

<sup>54</sup> Cod. 8. 33 (54). 3.

because he does not make it the property of the borrower; so the coins, if to be found anywhere, can be vindicated; if they have been spent in good faith by the borrower, the sum may be claimed in a personal action; if in bad faith, an action lies for their production. Conversely, anything may properly be given to a pupil of either sex without the tutor's authority. Accordingly, if a debtor pays to a pupil what he owes, the tutor's authority is needed; otherwise he will not be discharged from liability.<sup>54a</sup> This is clearly enacted in a constitution, which at the suggestion of the eminent Tribonian, quaestor of our sacred palace, we have published to the advocates of Caesarea, providing that the debtor of a pupil may make payment to his tutor or curator, having first obtained permission from the Court without any expense to the applicant.<sup>55</sup> If the judge makes the order, and payment follows, the debtor is completely secure. If the debtor pays without obtaining permission from the Court, then, if the pupil has the money intact or has been enriched by it, and none the less sues for the debt, he may be met with a plea of fraud; but, if he has wasted the money or it has been stolen from him, the debtor cannot set up a plea of fraud, but will be condemned to pay over again, because he made the first payment carelessly, without the tutor's authority and without complying with our constitution. On the other hand pupils cannot make a payment without the tutor's authority, because what they pay does not become the property of the creditor, since they are not allowed to alienate anything without such authority.<sup>54a</sup>

### VIII. ACQUISITION THROUGH AGENTS

216. The Roman Law of agency, whether in the field of property or of contract, developed slowly. It began in the family circle, *i.e.*, in connection with relations defined by status. It was gradually extended to relations established by contract. Thus we find the classes of persons through whom we acquire to be four, their relations to us being in the first three cases matter of status, in the fourth matter of contract. They are: (1) children and slaves in power; (2) slaves of whom we have the usufruct; (3) free men and other persons' slaves possessed in good faith; (4) free agents. We will consider these classes in order.

2. 9 pr.  
& 5.

G. 2. 86.

217. Children<sup>56</sup> and slaves in power (with whom Gaius includes persons in our *manus* or *mancipium*). Until the end of the Republic the position of children in power and of slaves

<sup>54a</sup> Gaius (§ 84) states the law more clearly—"Therefore if a debtor pay money to a pupil, he makes that money the pupil's, but he is not himself discharged; because a pupil cannot dissolve an obligation without his tutor's authority, since he is not allowed to alienate anything without his tutor's authority. But if he has been enriched by the money, and nevertheless sues for it, he may be repelled by a plea of fraud."

<sup>55</sup> Cod. 5. 37. 25.

<sup>56</sup> The term includes all free persons in power of any age or either sex.

as regards acquisition was indistinguishable, for "a person in our power can have nothing of his own", and, therefore, whatever any such person acquired vested automatically in his superior, even without the superior's knowledge and consent. This did not apply, however, to an inheritance or legacy, for a son or slave could not enter on an inheritance or accept a legacy except by the orders of the pater or dominus. The general principle applied to possession (apart from ownership), which vested through the child or slave in the father or master even though he were ignorant of the acquisition, provided that the child or slave had authority to acquire on his behalf, special or general. The latter was the case when acquisitions were made with the *peculium*, which the father or master allowed him to retain.<sup>57</sup> Under the Empire the principle that the son acquired for the father was progressively narrowed, until the old law remained in force only in the case of the *peculium profecticium* (§ 79).

218. Slaves held in usufruct. The rule was that what they acquired in the affairs of the usufructuary (*ex re nostra*), or by letting their services on hire to a third person (*ex operis suis*),<sup>58</sup> vested in the usufructuary; what they acquired from other sources went to their owners. Thus, they acquired an inheritance or legacy for the owner, not for the usufructuary. Possession might be acquired subject to the same distinction.

219. Free men and other persons' slaves possessed in good faith. The rule is the same as in the last case, so that anything acquired in either of the above-mentioned ways vested in the possessor, but acquisitions from any other source went to the putative slave, if he was in fact free; to his owner, if he was in fact a slave. The same applied to possession.

220. Free agents. The old rule was that nothing could be acquired through an extraneous person (*i.e.*, a person not falling under any of the above-mentioned classes). Gaius, after stating the rule, continues, "The only question is with regard to possession whether we can acquire it through a procurator".<sup>59</sup> Paulus, about fifty years later, expresses a more decided opinion: "It has been established in the interest of general convenience that we can acquire possession through a procurator."<sup>60</sup> A procurator was a general manager, but at an early date, perhaps in the course of the

<sup>57</sup> Dig. 41. 2. 1, 5.

<sup>58</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 279; *M.* p. 169.

<sup>59</sup> G. 2. 95. The palimpsest is illegible. The gap is variously supplied.

<sup>60</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 5. 2 2.

2. 9. 5.

second century, the same principle was applied to any free agent (as well as to tutors and curators). Justinian attributes this result to a constitution of Severus and Caracalla of A.D. 196, but, as appears from the constitution itself, the Emperors were stating what in their time was established law. It followed that in any case in which acquisition of possession carried with it acquisition of ownership, ownership also could be acquired through a free agent. But this was limited to cases of acquisition by natural law. It was inapplicable to the older forms of civil law acquisition, *mancipatio* and *in jure cessio*; for by these methods no one could acquire except the person who actually took part in the ceremony, so that agency of any kind was out of the question. In the case of tradition of a *res mancipi*, or if possession was derived from a non-owner, other necessary conditions being satisfied, possession would ripen into ownership by lapse of time (§ 156).

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II

#### TITLE IX

##### *Of persons through whom we acquire*

§ 216.

We acquire not only by ourselves, but also through those whom we have in our power; also through slaves in whom we have a usufruct; also through free men and other persons' slaves whom we possess in good faith. Let us investigate these cases separately.

§ 217.

1. Formerly, whatever came to children in power of either sex (with the exception of *castrense peculium*) was, without distinction, acquired for their parents; so much so, that what was acquired through one child, might be given to another, or to a stranger, or sold, or disposed of in any way the parents pleased. This seemed to us inhuman. Accordingly, we have enacted that whatever comes to children through their father's property (*ex re patris*) is to be acquired for the father in accordance with the old law. What hardship can there be in attributing to the father an acquisition for which he has supplied the means? But in the case of all other acquisitions<sup>61</sup> the father is to have a usufruct, the ownership remaining with the son.<sup>62</sup> 2. If a parent emancipated a child in power, earlier constitutions allowed the parent to retain one third of the property which did not vest in him as owner [*i.e.* the property of the child of which the father had the usufruct] as the price, so to say, of the

<sup>61</sup> Always excepting *peculium castrense* and *peculium quasi-castrense*.

<sup>62</sup> Earlier Emperors from Constantine onwards had enacted this with regard to property derived from the mother and other special cases of *bona adventicia*. Justinian made the principle general. Cod. 6. 61. 6.

emancipation. But it was not fair that on emancipation a son should lose part of his property, and that the honour of emancipation should entail a substantial diminution of fortune. Accordingly, we have decreed that instead of ownership of a third the parent is to retain the usufruct of a half.<sup>63</sup> In this way the son's property remains unimpaired, and the father has the enjoyment of a larger portion of the estate. 3. Again, you acquire what your slaves get by tradition, whether in consequence of stipulation or any other cause of acquisition. This goes to you, though you be ignorant of the acquisition, or unwilling to acquire. For a slave, being in his master's power, can have nothing of his own. But, if he is instituted heir, he cannot enter on the inheritance except by your orders; and if he does so, the inheritance vests in you, just as if you had yourself been instituted heir, and a legacy is acquired in the same way. You acquire through those in your power not only ownership, but also possession; for if they get the possession of anything, you are deemed to possess it; and accordingly through their possession usucapion or long time possession runs in your favour. 4. With regard to slaves in whom you have merely a usufruct the rule is that whatever they acquire in your affairs (*ex re vestra*) or by letting their services on hire (*ex operibus suis*)<sup>64</sup> accrues to you, but anything acquired otherwise goes to their owner. Accordingly, if such a slave is instituted heir, or receives a legacy or gift, the acquisition, in each case, goes not to the usufructuary, but to the owner. The same rule applies to any one whom you possess in good faith (as a slave), whether he is really free or is some one else's slave; for the rule which applies to the usufructuary applies equally to the bona fide possessor. Accordingly, anything acquired outside the two cases mentioned goes to the man himself, if he is in fact free, or to his real owner, if he is in fact a slave. When a bona fide possessor has usucaped the slave, he becomes his legal owner and entitled to all acquisitions from whatever source. But a usufructuary cannot usucape, first because he does not possess, but has merely a right of use and enjoyment, secondly, because he knows that the slave belongs to some one else. You acquire through the above-mentioned persons [slaves held in usufruct or bona fide possessed—a free person whom you in good faith treat as your slave] not only ownership but also possession—within the limits in each case defined above, that is if possession is acquired *ex re vestra* or *ex operibus suis*.

5. From what has been said it is evident that through free men, who are not subject to your power or possessed in good faith, and through another person's slave of whom you have neither a usufruct nor bona fide possession you cannot in any circumstances acquire. This is the meaning of the maxim that nothing can be acquired through an extraneous person (*per extraneam personam nihil adquiri posse*), except that it is settled in accordance with a constitution of the Emperor Severus<sup>65</sup> that through a free person such

<sup>63</sup> Cod. 6. 61. 6. 3.

<sup>64</sup> This is a variant of the more usual *ex operis suis*.

<sup>65</sup> Cod. 7. 32. 1.



as a general manager you acquire possession, not only if you know of the acquisition, but even if you do not; and you become owner as an immediate consequence of the possession, if the person who delivered the thing was owner, and, if he was not, by usucapion or long time possession.

[For section 6, see p. 179.]

## IX. SERVITUDES

221. Under the description of servitudes the later Roman Law included two classes of rights which seem to have little resemblance to one another, *viz.*, praedial servitudes, comprising such rights as English lawyers include under easements and profits, and personal servitudes, the principal one of which, *viz.*, usufruct, bears more resemblance to a life interest in immovable or movable property.

222. Nevertheless all servitudes have certain points in common<sup>66</sup> :—

(1) They are all real rights (*jura in re aliena*) protected by a real action called the *actio confessoria*, while a corresponding action—the *actio negatoria*—is available to the owner of property who wishes to take active steps to challenge another person's claim to servitude in regard to it (§ 677).

(2) They are incorporeal things and as such are the subject of special rules as to creation, extinction, and in other respects.

(3) They exist over the property of another for the benefit of a thing or of a person. Therefore:—(a) in the case of a praedial servitude the burden imposed on one property (*praedium serviens*) must always be related to a benefit attached to another property (*praedium dominans*). The Roman Law did not recognise as a praedial servitude what English lawyers call a profit “in gross”. “A servitude cannot be created to the effect that a man shall be at liberty to pluck fruit or to walk about or to picnic on another man's ground”<sup>67</sup>; (b) personal servitudes last only so long as the person lasts in whose favour they are created. They are determined therefore, by death or *capitis deminutio*. Further, being strictly personal in character, they cannot be transferred to a third person.

## X. REAL OR PRAEDIAL SERVITUDES

223. Real servitudes are either rustic or urban, according as they are appurtenant to land or to buildings. The principal rustic servitudes are *iter*, the right to go over another man's

<sup>66</sup> Girard, p. 383.

<sup>67</sup> Dig. 8. 1. 8 pr.

land on foot or on horseback<sup>68</sup>; *actus*, the right of passage for a vehicle, the right to drive draught animals and cattle<sup>69</sup>; *via*, which included the above and something more, in particular, the right to have a metalled track, which by the Law of the Twelve Tables was to be eight feet wide and sixteen feet where the road turned<sup>70</sup>; *aquaeductus*, the right to lead water over another's land. 2. 3 pr.

224. To the same head may be referred the right of drawing water, of watering cattle and rights which in English law are called "profits", such as the right of pasture, of excavating and burning lime, of digging sand, as well as the negative right that you shall not sink wells on your land, so as to diminish the supply of water to mine<sup>71</sup>. 2. 3. 2.

225. The principal urban servitudes are my right to have a drain through your land serving my house (*servitus cloacae immittendae*)<sup>72</sup>; servitude of support for a building (*jus oneris ferendi*); right to drive a balk of timber into my neighbour's wall (*jus tigni immittendi*); right to discharge rain-water by drop from the eaves or from a spout on to neighbouring land (*jus stillicidii vel fluminis avertendi vel recipiendi*, i.e., my right to divert or (the same thing) your liability to receive)<sup>73</sup>; rights of light and prospect, viz., *jus altius non tollendi*, i.e., my right to require you not to build so as to interfere with my access of light; *jus ne luminibus officiatur*, i.e., my right to access of light unimpeded by buildings or trees; *jus ne prospectui officiatur*, i.e., my right to a pleasing and unimpeded view.<sup>74</sup> This last is unknown to English law, for as an old Judge said: "For Prospect which is matter only of Delight, and not of Necessity, no action lies for the Stopping thereof, and yet it is a great Commendation of a House, if it has a long and easy Prospect".<sup>74a</sup> 2. 3. 1.

226. Besides the above, mention is made of a right of building higher (*jus altius tollendi*) and a right that rain-water shall not be received or discharged (*jus stillicidii vel fluminis non recipiendi aut non avertendi*).<sup>75</sup> These servitudes

<sup>68</sup> *pedes vel eques*. Dig. 8. 3. 12.

<sup>69</sup> *armenta*. Dig. *ibid*.

<sup>70</sup> Dig. 8. 3. 8.

<sup>71</sup> Dig. 8. 1. 15 pr.

<sup>72</sup> This is not mentioned in the Institutes, though it was, perhaps, the oldest of the urban servitudes. Girard, p. 385.

<sup>73</sup> Or is it different—your right to receive?

<sup>74</sup> Dig. 8. 2. 17 pr.; 8. 2. 15.

<sup>74a</sup> *Aldred's Case* (1611), 9 Rep. 58 b.

<sup>75</sup> G. 2. 31: *jus altius tollendi aedes aut non tollendi, ne luminibus vicini officiatur*; Dig. 8. 3. 2 pr.: *Rusticorum [sic] praediorum sunt licere altius tollere et officere praetorio vicini etc.* (Neratius); Dig. 8. 2. 2. (Gaius): (*jus*) *altius tollendi et officiendi luminibus vicini, aut non extollendi: item*

are a puzzle. They seem to be not servitudes at all, but natural incidents of ownership. Various explanations have been given. Perhaps the following is as plausible as any. Servitudes were lost by non-user for the usucapion period of two years (§ 229). But in the case of urban servitudes mere non-user was not enough. The owner of the servient land must build against the servitude and maintain the obstruction for the statutory period. This was called "usucapion of freedom".

"The better view is that freedom from servitudes may be acquired by usucapion, for the *lex Scribonia* put an end to the creation of servitudes by usucapion; not to their release. Accordingly, if for instance I owe you a servitude of not building higher, and I have maintained a higher building for the statutory period, the servitude is at an end."<sup>76</sup>

The same consequence follows if I obstruct your servitude of discharging rain-water on to my land.

In such cases my re-acquired right of doing as I please on my own land may have been regarded as a counter-servitude. If this seems improbable, the suggestion may be modified by supposing not a complete, but a partial, obstruction. This will leave your servitude still in existence, and I may be said *pro tanto* to have acquired a servitude against it. Another theory is that these anomalous servitudes were rights acquired in derogation of a municipal law or custom, restricting the height of buildings or allowing me to divert rain-water on to neighbouring premises.<sup>77</sup>

227. So far, it has been assumed that the enumerated rustic servitudes are appurtenant to land (*i.e.*, that the dominant praedium is land), and that the enumerated urban servitudes are appurtenant to a house (*i.e.*, that the dominant praedium is a house). But how are we to place, *e.g.*, a right of way appurtenant to a house, or, *e.g.*, a right that a neighbour shall not build appurtenant to a garden? Is the first urban, the second rustic? or does the general description continue to apply so that the first is rustic, the second urban? And if the character of the dominant praedium in each case determines the quality of the servitude what are we to say (as Buckland asks) if I acquire a right of way to land [or, rather, for land] and then build a house? "Does the servitude cease

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*stillicidium avertendi in tectum vel aream vicini aut non avertendi*; Inst. 2. 3. 1: *ut stillicidium vel flumen recipiat quis in aedes suas vel in aream, vel non recipiat.*

<sup>76</sup> Dig. 41. 3. 4, 28; cf. Dig. 8. 2. 6.

<sup>77</sup> Buckl., *T.* p. 264; *M.* p. 152.

to be rustic and become urban?"<sup>78</sup> The texts give no consistent answer to these questions. Thus aquaeductus is usually described as rustic, but one text speaks of a servitude to lead water through my house (according to this the character of the *servient* property seems to be decisive) as urban.<sup>79</sup> In the Institutes Justinian deals with normal cases and does not indulge in such speculations. The matter is not unimportant, for the law distinguishes in various ways between rustic and urban servitudes.<sup>80</sup> Thus in addition to a different mode of creation and extinction (§§ 228, 229), the interdict *de itinere actusque privato* applied to the first, not to the second<sup>81</sup>; and the rustic servitudes of *via iter actus* and *aquaeductus* could be hypothecated to a neighbouring land-owner,<sup>82</sup> urban servitudes not.<sup>83</sup> Girard makes the decision rest in each case upon the character of the dominant *praedium*. Buckland says "this opinion seems to create more difficulties than it solves".<sup>84</sup> For him, a right of way is always rustic, a right of light is always urban.

#### HOW PRAEDIAL SERVITUDES WERE CREATED AND EXTINGUISHED

228. (1) In the time of Gaius rustic servitudes were created by mancipation or by *in jure cessio*, urban servitudes only by *in jure cessio*. These modes applied to Italian soil. In the provinces similar rights were created "by pacts and stipulations". In the later law this mode was of general application. The pact settled the terms of the servitude. The stipulation was the promise to give effect to it, often combined with a penalty for failure to do so.<sup>85</sup> It is now generally agreed, contrary to the earlier doctrine, that the effect was to give a real right over the servient land, and not merely a personal right to have the servitude constituted by quasi-tradition (*infra*, p. 160).<sup>86</sup>

(2) Reservation (*deductio*). An owner might alienate land by mancipation or *in jure cessio*, and in the later law by *traditio*, on the condition that it was to be servient to land retained.<sup>87</sup>

(3) Testament. I might give a legacy of a servitude, thus

<sup>78</sup> *T.* p. 263.

<sup>79</sup> *Dig.* 6. 2. 11. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Girard, p. 387.

<sup>81</sup> *Dig.* 43. 19. 1. 1.

<sup>82</sup> *Dig.* 20. 1. 12 (Paulus citing Pomponius).

<sup>83</sup> *Dig.* 20. 1. 11. 3.

<sup>84</sup> *M.* p. 167.

<sup>85</sup> Girard, p. 399.

<sup>86</sup> Moyle, p. 218; Buckl. *T.* p. 266; *M.* p. 159.

<sup>87</sup> *Dig.* 8. 4. 3.

charging the land in the hands of my heir, or give a legacy of the land with reservation of a servitude, thus entitling my heir to its exercise; or, finally, leave the servitude to one person and the land, less the servitude, to another.

(4) Lapse of time. Servitudes could not, strictly speaking, be acquired by usucapion, because they did not admit of physical possession (§ 258), but it seems that in the early law the distinction between ownership and servitude was not sharply defined and that servitudes (some or all?) could be acquired by this method, just as rustic servitudes might be acquired by mancipation. Late in the Republic a *lex Scribonia* forbade the usucapion of servitudes,<sup>88</sup> whether of some or of all is uncertain. But, in any event, it was forgotten or circumvented. The enjoyment of *aquaeductus* for a period reaching back beyond the limits of legal memory was construed as a grant (*vetustatem vice legis tenere*).<sup>89</sup> In the provinces, lapse of time, which came to be fixed at ten years *inter praesentes* and twenty years *inter absentes* (§ 164), gave a title to a servitude, if the servitude had been continuously exercised *nec clam, nec vi nec precario* (openly, without challenge or objection and not by permission), but without (it seems) the usual requirements of good faith and just title. Ultimately this became the general rule.<sup>90</sup>

(5) Quasi-tradition. From an uncertain date, but certainly in the later Empire, if the owner of land acquiesced in the exercise of a servitude by a neighbour (this can only apply to a positive servitude), the neighbour acquired the servitude by a kind of tradition, or by "a substitute for tradition".<sup>91</sup> If, as might well be the case, a document recorded the transaction, the document would in itself be sufficient to convey the right, as it ultimately did in the case of ownership (§ 196); and this method of acquisition would hardly be distinguishable from the constitution of a servitude by pacts and stipulations, which also would normally be reduced to writing<sup>92</sup> (§ 434).

(6) *Adjudicatio*. It was competent to the *judex* in a *judicium divisorium* (§ 168) to declare a servitude in favour of any of the parties to the litigation.<sup>93</sup>

229. Praedial servitudes were extinguished by:—

(1) Surrender or renunciation. In the old law this was

<sup>88</sup> Dig. 41. 3. 4. 28 (29).

<sup>89</sup> Dig. 39. 3. 26; 43. 20. 3, 4; 39. 3. 1, 23.

<sup>90</sup> Cod. 7. 33. 12, 4; 3. 34. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Dig. 8. 1. 20 (*pro traditione*); 8. 3. 1, 2: *Traditio plane et patientia servitutium inducet officium praetoris*.

<sup>92</sup> Arangio-Ruiz, pp. 223, 224.

<sup>93</sup> Dig. 10. 2. 22, 3; 10. 3. 7, 1.

effected by *in jure cessio*, an *actio negatoria* denying the existence of the servitude, not defended by the owner of the dominant land. A rustic servitude might also be extinguished by re-mancipation. In the later law a servitude could be extinguished by mere agreement.<sup>94</sup> G. 2. 30.

(2) Merger (*confusio*), *viz.*, when the ownership of both the properties vested in the same hands, for no one can have a servitude over his own land (*nulli res sua servit*, § 240).

(3) Non-user for the statutory period, the period being the same as that required for acquisition, *viz.*, in the classical law, two years; under Justinian ten or twenty years.<sup>95</sup> In the case of urban servitudes, as remarked above, mere non-user was not sufficient. There must be obstruction on the part of the owner of the servient land maintained for the required period of years (§ 226).<sup>96</sup>

(4) Term or condition. A servitude might come to an end by expiry of the time for which it was constituted or by the effect of a resolutive condition. This might happen:—  
(a) if the ownership of the servient tenement was thus limited, in which case the servitude would expire with the expiry of the interest of the owner of the servient land;<sup>96a</sup>  
(b) if the grant of the servitude was itself thus limited. This is a departure from the general quality of perpetuity, which is in principle characteristic of praedial servitudes, distinguishing them from personal servitudes, which are determined (at latest) by the death of the person entitled.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II

#### TITLE III

##### *Of servitudes*

Servitudes of rustic immovables are the following:—*iter*, *actus*, *via*, *aquaeductus*. *Iter* is the right of going or passing for a man, not of driving a beast of draught or a vehicle: *actus* is the right of driving beasts of draught or vehicles. Accordingly, if a man has *iter* (merely) he has not *actus*. If he has *actus* he has also *iter*, and therefore may exercise his right of way without driving a beast. *Via* is the right of going, passing, and driving. It includes *iter* and *actus*. *Aquaeductus* is the right of leading water through another man's land. 1. Servitudes of urban immovables are attached to § 224.

<sup>94</sup> Girard, p. 404.

<sup>95</sup> *Paul Sent.* 1. 17; *Cod.* 8. 34. 13.

<sup>96</sup> Destruction of the dominant or servient land is often specified as another mode of extinction, but land is indestructible, and destruction of a house does not extinguish a servitude of *stillicidium*. *Dig.* 8. 2. 20, 2.

<sup>96a</sup> *Dig.* 8. 6. 11, 1.

buildings. They are called "urban" because houses are called urban properties, even though situated in the country. The following are urban servitudes—a neighbour's liability to support the weight of an adjoining building; to allow the adjoining proprietor to drive a beam into his wall; to receive (or not to receive) on to his house or yard the drip from his neighbour's eaves or the flow of water from his spout; not to raise the height of his building so as to obscure his neighbour's lights. 2. Some writers think that amongst rustic servitudes are properly included rights of drawing water, of driving cattle to water, of pasturage, of burning lime, of digging sand.

§ 228.

3. The reason why these servitudes are termed servitudes of immovables is because they imply the existence of immovable property (*praedia*). For no one can acquire a servitude, rustic or urban, unless he owns land, nor be charged with such a servitude, unless he owns land. 4. If any one wishes to create a servitude in favour of his neighbour, he should effect it by pacts and stipulations. A man may also by his will condemn his heir not to build higher so as to obstruct a neighbour's lights; or to suffer him to drive a beam into a wall, or to receive his eaves-drip; or to suffer him to go or to drive over his land, or to lead water from it.

### XI. PERSONAL SERVITUDES

230. The personal servitudes are (1) *usufructus*; (2) *usus*; (3) *habitatio*; (4) *operae servorum*.

2. 4 pr.

231. *Usufructus* (*usufruct*). Justinian repeats from the Digest Paul's definition of usufruct as "the right to use and take the fruits of another man's property, the substance remaining unimpaired"; and adds from the same source the explanation of Celsus "for it is a right over a corporeal thing; if this disappears, the right necessarily disappears with it".<sup>97</sup> The effect of running the two citations together is that the words "the substance remaining unimpaired" must be understood to mean "as long as the property in question lasts". But it is usual to quote Paul's words without the added explanation and to understand them to mean that the usufructuary may use and enjoy the property, but may not diminish its substance. This is perhaps what Paul himself meant to convey by the words *salva rerum substantia*. They are used in this sense in Ulpian's *Regulae*.<sup>98</sup>

2. 4. 2.

232. Whatever may be the precise intention of the definition, it is obvious that the existence of the servitude depends upon the existence of a thing over which it can be exercised. Hence, there cannot be a usufruct in things which are consumed in using them, including money. But a *senatus-*

<sup>97</sup> Dig. 7. 1. 1 and 2.

<sup>98</sup> Ulp. XXIV, 26: *Usufructus legari potest jure civili carum rerum quarum salva substantia utendi fruendi potest esse facultas.*

consultum of the early Empire allowed a quasi-usufruct in such things. The beneficiary became owner, but was required to give security for the restoration of the equivalent upon the determination of his interest. This development was rendered necessary by a practice which became common under the Empire for testators to bequeath a usufruct in the whole or part of their estate, thus constituting the legatee a tenant for life with remainder to the heir.

233. During the continuance of the usufruct the owner was free to exercise any rights not inconsistent with it; thus, to alienate or hypothecate<sup>99</sup> the property. The usufructuary, on the other hand, had all the ordinary rights of use and enjoyment and of taking fruits, but he must exercise these rights in a proper manner. Thus the usufructuary of agricultural land "must cultivate in the right way and use the property like a good father of a family". He might not cut timber trees.<sup>100</sup> He might open and work quarries and the like, if he could do so without undue disturbance of the course of agriculture.<sup>1</sup> He was required by the praetor to give security by stipulation for proper use of the property and for its restoration on the expiry of the usufruct. A usufruct could not be alienated, that is to say a usufructuary could not convey his right and liability to a third party, but there was nothing to prevent his contracting with another person to allow him to enjoy the benefit of the usufruct while it lasted, whether by way of gift, or hire or sale.

234. Usus (use), was a right of less extent than usufruct and of less frequent occurrence. The usuary could only use the property to satisfy the personal wants of himself and his family. The usuary of a house might occupy it with his wife, family and servants, and receive guests. If he resided in the house himself he might (in Labeo's opinion) take in a lodger, but not lease the house to another person.<sup>2</sup>

235. Habitatio. This was the right to use a house. It had been doubted whether it was a distinct servitude, or indeed a servitude at all. Justinian pronounced it to be distinct from usufruct and use, and adopted the opinion of Marcellus that the person entitled might not only occupy the house himself, but also let it to others.

236. Operae servorum was a right to use the services of

<sup>99</sup> Cod. 3. 33. 2.

<sup>100</sup> Dig. 7. 1. 11.

<sup>1</sup> Dig. 7. 1. 13, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Dig. 7. 8. 2.



slaves scarcely distinguishable from *usus*.<sup>3</sup> Like *habitatio* (and unlike usufruct and use) it was not lost by non-user or *capitis deminutio*.<sup>4</sup> This is said to be reminiscent of an earlier view that the right was merely contractual and governed by the rules of contract.<sup>5</sup>

237. Personal servitudes were created in the same way as praedial servitudes: *viz.* by (1) in jure cessio,<sup>6</sup> later by pacts and stipulations; (2) reservation on a grant; (3) testament; (4) lapse of time; (5) quasi-tradition; (6) adjudication; to which must be added (7) statute (*lege*), particularly the usufruct which in the later law the father enjoyed in the *bona adventicia* of his son, and the usufruct of one half which he retained upon emancipation (§ 79).

238. Personal servitudes were extinguished in the same ways as praedial servitudes: *viz.* by (1) surrender or renunciation; (2) merger (*consolidatio*); (3) destruction or substantial alteration of the subject-matter. If a house was burnt down the usufruct was gone alike of the house, the site and the material<sup>7</sup>; (4) non-user (except as mentioned above); (5) term or condition; and finally (6) death and (except as mentioned above) *capitis deminutio*, any *capitis deminutio* before Justinian, *capitis deminutio maxima* and *media* in his system.<sup>8</sup> If the usufructuary was a corporate body, such as a municipality, the usufruct was taken to be constituted for one hundred years, which was considered to be the longest duration of human life.<sup>9</sup> Though, normally, usufruct was a life interest it might be constituted for a definite period, *e.g.* for ten years, but, in any event, death put an end to it. Destruction by *capitis deminutio* was avoided by providing for a series of annual or shorter usufructs (in *singulos annos—menses—dies*), or for a new usufruct to come into existence immediately on the destruction of the first (“*quotiens capite minutus erit*”—*repetitus usufructus*). A grant of a usufruct for “so long as he lives”, or for a definite term, was held to import a tacit renewal in the event of premature determination.<sup>10</sup>

239. ABNORMAL SERVITUDES.—Rights in the nature of personal servitudes might be created for a limited purpose,

<sup>3</sup> Dig. 7. 7. *Operae animalium* is referred to in a single text (Dig. 7. 9. 5, 3). For *usus* of slaves and animals see Inst. 3. 5. 3 and 4.

<sup>4</sup> Dig. 7. 8. 10 pr.; 33. 2. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Arangio-Ruiz, p. 222.

<sup>6</sup> G. 2. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Dig. 7. 4. 5, 2; 8. 2. 20, 2.

<sup>8</sup> G. 3. 83; Inst. 3. 10 pr.

<sup>9</sup> Dig. 7. 1. 56.

<sup>10</sup> *Vat.* 63, 64; Dig. 7. 4. 1; 7. 4. 3.

*e.g.* a right of passage or of taking water. They seem to resemble real servitudes, but are distinguished from them because they exist for the benefit of a person and not of a dominant tenement. They last no longer than the person entitled. But they are not merely contractual. They burden the land. The commentators call them abnormal or irregular servitudes. An English lawyer would call them easements or profits in gross. For instance, there is the case, mentioned in the Digest, of a legacy of a house together with a right of transit through other houses comprised in the inheritance.<sup>11</sup> This is described as a *usus transeundi personae datus* and contrasted with a legacy of a [real] servitude. Other texts speak of a "use of water".<sup>12</sup> Such rights being personal did not pass to heirs.

## XII. RULES RELATING TO SERVITUDES IN GENERAL

240. Before leaving the subject of servitudes it may be well to direct attention to certain rules of general application to all servitudes, or, at least, to all real servitudes. They are these:—

(i) No one can have a servitude over his own property—*nulli res sua servit*.<sup>13</sup> Thus if I have a right of way over your field and acquire it by purchase, the right of way is extinguished, and does not revive if the field is again sold.<sup>14</sup> If I own two houses adjoining one another I may find it convenient to carry water from house A through a gutter on house B. That is, I make house B (in fact) servient to house A. If I sell house B can I claim to exercise a servitude over it without express reservation? The question is as old as the glossators. French Law allows the servitude. It is called a servitude *ex destinatione patrisfamilias*—*par la destination du père de famille* ("Destination du père de famille vaut titre").<sup>15</sup>

(ii) A servitude cannot consist in doing—*servitus in faciendo consistere nequit*. Servitude is a right to require the owner of the servient land to submit to something being done, or to abstain from doing something, on his own land—*ut aliquid patiatur aut non faciat*<sup>16</sup>—*e.g.* to allow me to go over his land (positive servitude), or not to build (negative servitude). He could not be called upon to do something

<sup>11</sup> Dig. 33. 3. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Dig. 7. 8. 21; 8. 3. 37.

<sup>13</sup> Dig. 8. 2. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Dig. 8. 4. 10.

<sup>15</sup> *C. C.* art. 692. For South African Law, see Lee, p. 177.

<sup>16</sup> Dig. 8. 1. 15, 1.

except in the single case of the *jus oneris ferendi*, which placed upon the owner of the wall the duty of keeping it in repair.<sup>17</sup>

(iii) There cannot be a servitude of a servitude—*servitus servitutis esse non potest*.<sup>18</sup> Thus if I have a *jus actus* or a usufruct over your land I cannot create in favour of another a *jus itineris*. The explanation is simple. A servitude is a burden on land. It cannot be laid on the land by one who is not the owner, or practically such (*infra v*).

(iv) A servitude must be exercised civiliter, that is, in the way least burdensome to the owner of the land.<sup>19</sup>

(v) A servitude must have a perpetual cause.<sup>20</sup> This means that the thing over which the right is exercised, as well as the exercise of the right, must be capable of perpetual duration. There cannot be a servitude to take water from a pool or cistern, or, conversely, to discharge on to your land the waste water from my bath. But this does not prevent a servitude being limited to certain times and seasons, *e.g.* exercisable at certain times of the day or on alternate days.<sup>21</sup> In another sense a servitude must admit of perpetual duration, *viz.* that it can be created only by a dominus, or at least an *emphyteuticarius* or a *superficiarius* (§§ 242, 243), not by a usufructuary or a lessee. Though in strict law a real servitude could not be constituted *ex tempore*, or *ad tempus* or *sub conditione*, any such qualifications of the grant were upheld by the praetor's jurisdiction.<sup>22</sup> Personal servitudes were free from these restrictions.

(vi) Remedies. The law gave for the protection of servitudes remedies the same as or analogous to those given for the protection of ownership. The *actio confessoria* asserting a servitude (§ 677) was a kind of vindication. For the denial of a servitude there was a corresponding negative action (*actio negatoria*). The usual possessory remedies or variants of them were also available.<sup>23</sup>

### THE INSTITUTES

#### BOOK II (TIT. IV and V)

##### TITLE IV

##### *Of usufruct*

§ 231.

Usufruct is the right to use and take the fruits of another man's property, the substance remaining unimpaired. For it is a right

<sup>17</sup> Dig. 8. 5. 6, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Dig. 33. 2. 1. *Qu. a usufruct of a usufruct?* Girard, p. 391, r. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Dig. 8. 1. 9; *C. C.* art. 683.

<sup>20</sup> Dig. 8. 2. 28.

<sup>21</sup> Dig. 8. 1. 5, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Dig. 8. 1. 4 pr.

<sup>23</sup> Buckl. *M.* pp. 161, 165.

over a corporeal thing; if the thing disappears, the right necessarily disappears with it.

1. Usufruct is separated from ownership in many ways. For example, by leaving a legacy of a usufruct; in which case the heir has the bare ownership, the legatee the usufruct; conversely, if a testator bequeaths land with a deduction of the usufruct, the legatee has the bare ownership, the heir the usufruct: again the usufruct may be left to one person, the land, less the usufruct, to another. If it is desired to constitute a usufruct *inter vivos*, it must be done by pacts and stipulations. But in order that ownership may not be rendered valueless by the usufruct being for ever detached from it, the law provides that in certain events the usufruct shall be extinguished and re-absorbed in the ownership. § 237.

2. There may be a usufruct not only of land and houses, but also of slaves or beasts, or of anything else, except things which are consumed in the use, for natural reason as well as civil law declares them not to be susceptible of usufruct; such are wine, oil, wheat, clothes; to which may be added coined money, for this too in a way is consumed in the use by passing from hand to hand. But in view of practical convenience, the senate has ordained that a usufruct can be constituted over such things, on condition of security being given to the heir. Accordingly, if there is a legacy of a usufruct of money, the money is paid over to the legatee and becomes his property, and the legatee gives the heir security for the return of an equivalent sum in the event of his death or *capitis deminutio*. Other things are similarly delivered to the legatee and become his property, but their value is assessed and security given for the return of the assessed value in the same events. The result is that the senate did not indeed create a usufruct of such things, for that was impossible; but by requiring security has made them susceptible of a quasi-usufruct. § 232.

3. Usufruct is determined by the death of the usufructuary and by *capitis deminutio maxima* and *media*, and by failing for the statutory term to take advantage of the usufruct as constituted. All this is contained in our constitution.<sup>24</sup> Again, usufruct is determined if it is ceded by the usufructuary to the owner of the property (*Cession* to a stranger has no effect): or, conversely, if the usufructuary acquires the ownership (*consolidatio*). Further, it is settled that a usufruct of a house is extinguished if the house is burnt down or destroyed by earthquake or falls into ruin; there does not remain a usufruct even of the site. § 238.

4. When a usufruct is determined, it reverts to the owner of the property, who has from that time on full rights of ownership.

## TITLE V

### *Of use and habitation*

Usus (the bare use of a thing) is constituted and extinguished in the same ways as usufruct.

1. Use is a right of less extent than usufruct.

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<sup>24</sup> Cod. 3. 33. 16.

§ 234. If one has the bare use of land, this is understood not to go further than taking vegetables, fruit, flowers, hay, straw and fuel for daily use, and the usufruct is only allowed to remain on the land, so long as this is not inconvenient to the owner and does not interfere with the work of agriculture; and he may not make over his right to another by way of sale or hire or gift, whereas a usufructuary may do all these things.

§ 233. 2. Again, one who has the use of a house may occupy it himself, but may not transfer his right of occupation to any one else; and the law has only reluctantly admitted that he may receive a guest and live in the house with his wife and children and slaves and servants; if a woman has the use of a house, she may live in it with her husband.

3. If a person has the use of a slave, he may employ his services, but he may not transfer his right to another. The same applies to the use of beasts of burden.

4. If the use of cattle or of sheep is left by will, the legatee has no right to the milk, or the lambs or the wool, for all these things are fruits. He may, of course, use the cattle to dung his land.

§ 235. 5. If a right of habitation is left by legacy or created in any other way, it seems to be neither use nor usufruct, but a distinct right. In the interest of practical convenience we have decided in accordance with the opinion of Marcellus<sup>25</sup> that persons who have the right of habitation may not only live in the house themselves, but also let the right to others.<sup>26</sup>

6. So much, then, of servitudes, and usufruct, use and habitation. We shall speak of inheritance and obligations in their proper place. We have given a summary account of the modes of acquisition *jure gentium*, let us now see how things are acquired by statutory and civil law methods.<sup>27</sup>

### XIII. OTHER JURA IN RE ALIENA

241. In the preceding sections and the relevant Titles of the Institutes attention has been directed to one *jus in re aliena*, namely Servitude. Other institutions may properly be included under the same description, *viz.* Emphyteusis and Superficies and the forms of real security described as *pignus* and *hypotheca*. These topics are not systematically treated in the Institutes. We shall give a short account of them and take occasion to say something of the Roman theory of possession. The Roman real security, as will be seen, in the older law was not actually a *jus in re aliena*, for it took the form of a conveyance of ownership with a pact to reconvey if the debt to be secured was duly satisfied. The Roman Law of mortgage, therefore, if the description may be allowed, will

<sup>25</sup> *Vid. sup. ad Inst. l. 4 pr.*

<sup>26</sup> *Cod. 3. 33. 13, 1.*

<sup>27</sup> These topics have been dealt with above.

be found to include the earlier institution of *mancipatio* or in *jure ccssio cum fiducia* as well as its later developments *pignus* and *hypotheca*.

#### XIV. EMPHYTEUSIS—SUPERFICIES

242. *Emphyteusis*<sup>28</sup> had two lines of ancestry, one Roman, one Greek. Under the early Empire it was the practice of municipal authorities in Italy and elsewhere (less often of the State) to grant leases of agricultural land in perpetuity or for a long term of years conditionally on the payment of an annual rent. The rent was termed *vectigal* and land so granted was called *ager vectigalis*. The grantee was not owner of the land, but in course of time came to be treated very much as if he were. The law protected his interest by giving him an action in the nature of a vindication (*actio vectigalis*) to get possession of the property from the owner or from any third party, and, in addition, the usual possessory interdicts. Another source of the institution is to be found in grants made in the Greek States under the name of *emphyteusis*, a Greek word meaning "grafting" or "planting". In the later Empire the word was applied, generally, to all leases in perpetuity or for a long term of years, and the institution was greatly developed. Grants of this character were made not only by the Emperor and public authorities (usually of barren lands to be brought into cultivation), but also by private persons, and in particular by great landed proprietors, ecclesiastical and civil. But the nature of the interest of the grantee remained undefined. It was a question whether he was to be regarded as a lessee or a purchaser. The doubt was resolved by the Emperor Zeno who decided that *emphyteusis* was neither hire nor sale, but a contract of a special character, governed by its own rules.<sup>29</sup> By this time the older *ager vectigalis* had faded out of sight. Justinian in the rubric of Digest vi. 3 identifies the earlier and the later institution—*si ager vectigalis id est emphyteuticarius petatur*. The juristic position of the later *emphyteuta* was much the same as that of the holder of the *ager vectigalis*. He was similarly aided by action and interdict. His interest passed to his heirs and was alienable subject to the proprietor's right of pre-emption, or, in the alternative, of claiming a fine of 2 per cent. of the purchase price. He held conditionally on the payment of an annual quitrent (*canon*) and the duty of keeping the land in cultivation. If he failed in these

<sup>28</sup> GIRAUD, p. 411 ff.; BUCKL. *T.* p. 275; *M.* p. 166.

<sup>29</sup> G. 3. 146; Inst. 3. 24. 3; Cod. 4. 66. 1.

particulars he might be ejected; in case of non-payment of rent, as Justinian enacted, if the rent was three years in arrear.<sup>30</sup>

243. Contrary to English Law, which permits separate ownership of horizontal strata (as in Lincoln's Inn, where a set of chambers on the ground floor may be owned by one tenant in fee while the floor above is owned by another tenant in fee), the Roman Law admitted no departure from the principle *cujus est solum ejus est usque ad sidera et ad inferos* and the allied rule *superficies solo cedit*. Therefore, no one could own the surface except as owning the land.

"If in a conveyance of land the alienor purports to convey the soil apart from the surface, this does not prevent the surface passing with the soil, for by its nature it is one with it."<sup>31</sup>

But this did not exclude the possibility of a *jus in re* exercised over the surface. From an early date such a right was admitted under the name of *superficies*, the person entitled to it being known as *superficiarius*.<sup>32</sup> This was a right to the enjoyment of a house built upon another person's land, either in perpetuity or for a long term of years. The institution originated in the case of erections set up by, or by permission of, the magistrates upon land belonging to the State.<sup>33</sup> It was adopted by towns in the form of what today would be called building leases, and finally by private citizens. The tenant paid a ground-rent called *solarium*. He had the benefit of an interdict called the *interdictum de superficie* modelled upon the interdict *uti possidetis* (§ 753), and other remedies, in particular a praetorian action in rem in the nature of a vindication.

## XV. REAL SECURITIES<sup>34</sup>

(Fiducia—Pignus—Hypotheca)

244. By a real security is meant a real right created to secure the performance of an obligation. It corresponds in general with what in English Law is called a mortgage. In Roman Law it assumed one of three forms: 1, transfer of ownership with a condition of re-transfer if the obligation was discharged; 2, transfer of possession, but not of ownership; 3, charge on property without transfer of either. The corresponding institutions are *mancipatio* (or in *jure cessio*) *cum fiducia*, *pignus* and *hypotheca*.

<sup>30</sup> Cod. 4. 66. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Dig. 44. 7. 44, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Dig. 43. 18; Girard, p. 411; Buckl. T. p. 276.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., bankers' booths. Dig. 18. 1. 32.

<sup>34</sup> Girard, p. 814; Buckl. T. p. 473; M. 353.

245. *Mancipatio* (or in *jure cessio*) *cum fiducia*.<sup>35</sup> This was a formal conveyance of property accompanied by an agreement as to the terms on which it was to be held (*fiducia*, § 508). These would include an undertaking to reconvey, if the debt was discharged. Originally, no doubt, as in the common law mortgage, failure to discharge a debt on the agreed date confirmed ownership (which had already passed by the conveyance) permanently and irrevocably in the creditor, but in the classical period this consequence did not follow unless there was an agreement to that effect (*lex commissoria*). It was more usual to authorise the creditor to realise his security by selling the property. As owner, it was in any event competent to him to do so and the right of sale could not be wholly withheld from him,<sup>36</sup> but it might be regulated, and if he sold contrary to the terms of the agreement he exposed himself to the debtor's *actio fiduciae*, in which condemnation involved *infamia*. This institution was in existence in the classical period of Roman Law. With the discontinuance of the formal methods of conveyance it passed out of use and Justinian's commissioners expunged all reference to it from the classical texts cited in the Digest. A very small oversight betrayed their handiwork. In a passage which speaks (or is made to speak) of *pignus* the pronoun which refers to it is "*eam*" not "*id*", a sure indication that the neuter noun *pignus* has been substituted for the feminine noun *fiducia* (*supra*, § 36). This was the starting point of a scholarly reconstruction of the history of Roman mortgage. G. 4. 182.

246. *Pignus* (pledge or pawn). This means the handing over of movable or immovable property by way of security. In the Institutes it is described amongst the contracts *re*, but its aspect as a real right only receives incidental notice. The explanation given is that the Romans did not regard it as such, but this has not deterred the moderns from treating it (and rightly) as a *jus in re aliena*. The pledgee had juristic possession (§ 253), and the advantage of the usual interdicts for retaining and recovering possession (§ 746) as well as the special interdict and action mentioned in the next section. Usucapion-possession (§ 253) remained with the pledgor.<sup>37</sup> Originally, the creditor, like the pledgee in English Law, had merely the right to retain the property until his claim was satisfied, but no right of sale apart from agreement.<sup>38</sup> Later, 3. 14. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Girard, p. 552 ff., p. 814; Buckl. *T.* 431, 474; *M.* 260, 353.

<sup>36</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 2. 13. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Dig. 41. 3. 16.

<sup>38</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 74 (73) (*Javolenus*); G. 2. 64; Inst. 2. 8. 1.



a right of sale was taken to be implied unless expressly excluded.<sup>39</sup> In Justinian's law the parties might make their own terms as to time and conditions of sale,<sup>40</sup> short of excluding it altogether, which was not allowed.<sup>41</sup> In the absence of agreement as to sale, the creditor might sell after three notices or judicial sentence, and two years' delay. If he could not find a purchaser he might petition the Emperor for an order of foreclosure (*impetratio dominii*), but even after the order had been made, the debtor still had a further two years within which to redeem.<sup>42</sup> The right to foreclose could no longer be a term in the contract, the *lex commissaria* having been prohibited by Constantine.<sup>43</sup>

4. 6. 7. 247. *Hypotheca* was a real security created by mere agreement without delivery. It seems to have come into use in connection with the hire of land. It was usual to agree that the instruments of husbandry and the cattle on the land should be security for the rent, and similarly the rent of house property was secured by a hypothec of the furniture (*invecta et illata*). In the first case the praetor gave the landlord an interdict (*interdictum Salvianum*) to get possession of the property in the hands of the tenant<sup>44</sup> and later an action (*actio Serviana*) to follow the property and recover it from the debtor or any third person. The principle of pledge without possession once admitted, the action was extended to house-tenants and finally to every other case in which the property was charged as a security without or with delivery.<sup>45</sup> This went far to eliminate any difference between *pignus* and *hypotheca*. In fact Marcian says that there was no difference between them except the sound of the words.<sup>46</sup> However, Ulpian, and Justinian after him, say that, if words are used exactly, *pignus* implies transfer of possession, *hypotheca* not.<sup>47</sup> It must not be inferred from the use of the word *hypotheca* that the Roman hypothec was of Greek origin. Pledge without possession was a natural outgrowth of the Roman *pignus*; the use of the Greek word to describe it came later.

<sup>39</sup> Dig. 13. 7. 4 (Ulpian).

<sup>40</sup> Cod. 8. 33 (34). 3, 1.

<sup>41</sup> Dig. *ibid. in fine* (interpolated); Paul, *Sent.* 2. 5. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Cod. 8. 33 (34). 3, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Cod. 8. 34 (35). 3.

<sup>44</sup> G. 4. 147; Inst. 4. 15. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Under the names of *actio pigneraticia in rem*, *actio hypothecaria* and *actio quasi Serviana* the *actio Serviana* enlarged its original boundaries. It is not known whether the *interdictum Salvianum* equally did so.

<sup>46</sup> Dig. 20. 1. 5, 1: *Inter pignus et hypothecam tantum nominis sonus differt.*

<sup>47</sup> Dig. 13. 7. 9, 2: *Propter pignus dicimus quod ad creditorem transit, hypothecam cum non transit nec possessio ad creditorem.*

248. The same property might be pledged (in the wide sense of the word) to two or more persons successively and every one of them was entitled, if he could, to have the benefit of the security. Apart from numerous cases of statutory privilege, in particular the privilege of the fiscus, successive incumbrances ranked in order of priority. *Qui prior est tempore, potior est jure.*<sup>48</sup> The first mortgagee alone could sell. He held the proceeds, after satisfying his own claim, in trust for subsequent incumbrancers. A later mortgagee might buy out an earlier one and step into his shoes. This was called the *jus offerendi* or *jus offerendae pecuniae*.

249. Legal or tacit hypothecs. Besides the conventional hypothecs above described, there were a great number of legal or tacit hypothecs, that is hypothecs created by law, either general, affecting the debtor's property in general, or special, affecting some property in particular. An instance of a general hypothec is the charge which the law created in favour of a pupil or minor over the whole of the tutor's or curator's estate (§ 124), or in favour of a legatee over the whole of the testator's estate in the hands of the heir (§ 335). An instance of a special hypothec is the tacit hypothec given to a person who had spent money in repairing another person's house or ship. The landlord's hypothec, referred to above, developed into a tacit hypothec over the fruits in the case of land, and over the *inventa et illata* in the case of a house. Anything beyond this had to be the subject of agreement.

250. A real security might be extinguished as a consequence of the extinction of the principal debt secured by it, or independently. Amongst the latter modes of extinction the most important was release, which might be express, for which a bare agreement was sufficient,<sup>49</sup> or tacit. This would be the usual consequence of restoring the pledge to the debtor.<sup>50</sup>

Prescription was another mode of extinction. In the old law if a thing *manipated cum fiducia* reverted to the owner, not under a contract of hire, or *precario*, and remained in his possession for a year, he re-acquired it by *usucapion* (*usureceptio*). This was a case of *usucapio lucrativa* (§ 163). Acquisition of ownership by *usucapio* did not extinguish a hypothec any more than a servitude.<sup>51</sup> But under the Empire acquisition of ownership by *longi temporis*

<sup>48</sup> Cod. 8. 17 (18). 2: *Nam cum de pignore utraque pars contendat, praevalet jure qui praevenit tempore.*

<sup>49</sup> Dig. 13. 7. 9, 3.

<sup>50</sup> Cod. 8. 25 (26). 9, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Dig. 41. 3. 44, 5.

praescriptio and under Justinian by longissimi temporis praescriptio had this effect (§§ 164, 166). The debtor himself was safe from attack if he had remained in possession with the passive acquiescence of the creditor for forty years.<sup>52</sup>

251. Charges on land created by bare agreement without delivery of possession and the numerous tacit hypothecs imposed upon it in the later Empire were a grave embarrassment to purchasers as well as to subsequent mortgagees, and there was no adequate system of land registration which might have mitigated this inconvenience.<sup>53</sup> The Emperor Leo went some way towards removing it by giving a preference to hypothecs registered in Court, or subscribed by three witnesses of good repute.<sup>54</sup> But in spite of this the later Roman Law of mortgage continued to be in the highest degree complicated and unsatisfactory.

## XVI. POSSESSION

252. It is evident that possession is not the same as ownership. You may own without possessing. You may possess without owning. Possession implies physical control and the exclusion of adverse possessors. This may exist in very various circumstances. The person to whom you have handed your watch to look at is in possession of it, so is the watch-maker with whom you have left it for repair, so is the pawnbroker with whom you have pledged it, so is the thief who has taken it from you. Possession, to begin with, is matter of fact, not of right, but it is a fact which the law protects, by giving a possessor, merely as such, a remedy against another who disturbs him in his possession, or deprives him of it. In the Roman Law this takes the form of what is called the interdict procedure.

253. But the law will scarcely extend its protection to the possession (as distinct from the person) of every casual possessor. A line must be drawn. English Law gives a possessory remedy to any possessor who is not merely a servant. The Roman Law stops short of this. It protects the possession of the owner, of the bona fide and mala fide possessor, but not of one who holds under a contract as depositary, borrower, mandatory, hirer and so forth. From this there results a distinction between a higher and a lower degree of possession. The latter we describe as natural possession or detention. The Romans called it in possessione

<sup>52</sup> Cod. 7. 39. 8 pr.; Cod. 7. 39. 7, 1.

<sup>53</sup> Arangio-Ruiz, p. 189.

<sup>54</sup> Cod. 8. 17 (18). 11, 1.

esse—*naturalis possessio*. The former we call interdict possession or juristic possession. The texts call it *possessio* merely, sometimes (perhaps by interpolation) *possessio civilis*.

It follows from this that the two kinds of possession may co-exist. If I, the owner, lend you my horse, I retain the juristic possession, you acquire the natural possession. But if you appropriate the horse to your own use, you have ousted me from possession and made the juristic possession your own.<sup>55</sup> There is yet another degree of possession, namely the possession which by lapse of time ripens into ownership (sometimes described as *possessio ad usucapionem*, § 161). This seems to be what the writers of the classical age commonly mean when they speak of *possessio civilis*.<sup>56</sup>

254. What is the meaning of the distinction in Roman Law between the two degrees of possession? According to the doctrine associated with the name of Savigny it is a question of mental attitude. All possession has two elements, a physical and a mental, which the Romans distinguish as *corpus* and *animus*. The first is the physical relation of the possessor to the object. The second is his sense of that relation. If he is minded to deal with the thing as his own (*animus domini—animus sibi habendi*), no matter whether rightfully or wrongfully, he possesses in the fullest sense, and is entitled to the interdicts; when he is not so minded, he has detention merely without the use of the interdicts.

255. But there are cases which do not accommodate themselves to this classification. The *emphyteuta* (§ 242), the *superficiarius* (§ 243), the pledgee (§ 246), the *precario tenens* (§ 510) and the sequester (§ 422) have interdict possession, though they have not the *animus sibi habendi*. These are cases in which a dominus has parted with possession, but not with ownership. Savigny gives them the name of derivative possession (*abgeleiteter Besitz*). In all four cases the *animus* of the possessor is directed not to the exercise of dominium, but to the assertion of a right to possess derived from a previous possessor. They are exceptions from the general rule and require explanation. They are explained on historical grounds, or on grounds of necessity or convenience.

256. So far we have assumed the correctness of Savigny's description of the *animus* required to constitute possession (*stricto sensu*) as being the *animus sibi habendi*—the will to hold as owner. But Ihering opposes to this "subjective theory" of possession his own "objective theory" of

<sup>55</sup> Dig. 41. 2. 3, 18; 20.

<sup>56</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 197; *M.* p. 120.

possession. According to this, intention is irrelevant to the distinction between detention and possession. Any person has, in principle, possession, *i.e.* interdict possession, who consciously holds a thing whether for himself or for another. If in any case a person so holding is not a "possessor", it must be either because the thing in question cannot in law be "possessed"—*e.g.* a *res extra commercium*, or because the law for some reason does not accord "possession". Such was the case with the contract of loan, mandate and the like, the result of a development from a nucleus in the Roman family, whose subordinate members might detain, but could not "possess". It will be remarked that either theory must take account of exceptions. But what is normal for Savigny (the denial of possession to the borrower, mandatory, etc.) is exceptional for Ihering, and what for Savigny is exceptional (the "possession" of the *emphyteuta*, etc.) for Ihering is normal.

257. Savigny's theory rests principally upon texts of Paulus cited in the Digest. Ihering maintains that this jurist's views were peculiar to himself and erroneous, and, besides, have been misinterpreted. Not to embark upon a discussion which lies outside the scope of this book, we may be content to say that the Romans undoubtedly made use of the interdict procedure long before they had any theory of possession. Convenience, not logical consistency, determined the limits of its application. The classical jurists themselves had no single theory of possession. The Digest reflects their differences of opinion, as well as later doctrinal developments interpolated in the text. Roman Law, no more than English Law, "ever worked out an adequate theory of possession".<sup>57</sup>

258. Incorporeal things could not be possessed, but a usufructuary had in fact control of the property comprised in the usufruct, and if the law did not attribute to him juristic possession,<sup>58</sup> it allowed him the use of the usual possessory interdicts. The idea that he "quasi-possessed" the items comprised in the usufruct easily passed into the idea that he had quasi-possession of the usufruct itself (*possessio juris*), and the same reasoning was applied to praedial servitudes, to inheritance, and to a constantly increasing number of rights. In the later law the principle that incorporeal things could not be possessed was an abstract dogma without practical

<sup>57</sup> So say Buckland and McNair, *Roman Law and Common Law*, p. 65. Secus, Pollock, *Torts* (14), p. 274, "Notwithstanding first appearances, the common law has a theory of possession, and a highly elaborated one".

<sup>58</sup> Dig. 41. 1. 10, 5.

significance. The quasi-possessor enjoyed the use of the usual interdicts or of special interdicts adapted to the particular case.

## APPENDIX

## INFLUENCE OF THE ROMAN LAW OF PROPERTY ON MODERN SYSTEMS

259. This concludes what we have to say on the Roman Law of Property. We shall not invite the student to travel far in what may seem to him the wilderness of comparative law. But something may fitly be said about the impact of this branch of Roman Law on modern systems.

- (i) *Ownership in general.* Rome has transmitted her conception of ownership to the modern world. It is not surprising, therefore, that countries with a Roman Law background have made use of its rules in framing their codes. The Law of Nations has done the same, with the result that "those parts of the international system which refer to dominion, its nature, its limitations, the modes of acquiring and securing it are pure Roman Property Law".<sup>59</sup> English Law has taken its own course, its debt to Roman Law for the most part forgotten or unacknowledged.
- (ii) *Conveyance of land.* We have seen that the classical Roman Law made little difference between transfer of land and transfer of movables by delivery (§ 138). The Institutes of Gaius and of Justinian indicate no distinction. It was only in the Byzantine period that it became usual to record transfers of land in a public register (§ 196). In the Middle Ages feudalism together with the customary laws of the German nations and the survival of the Roman *traditio per certam* engendered a vast variety of usage which has been replaced by various systems of land registration. In Holland this was made general by a law of the Emperor Charles V in 1529, which is the historical parent of the South African Registry of Deeds.<sup>60</sup> England lags behind, and has no general system of land registration in actual use.
- (iii) *Long continued possession.* This is generally, if the necessary conditions are satisfied, a title to property, but not in England (except in the matter of servitudes). By English Law, in the case of land, twelve years' adverse possession extinguishes the right of the original owner but does not give a positive title to the possessor. At common law possession of movables, however long continued, never gave a title. The right to sue for their recovery was statute barred by a term of six years, but that is another matter.<sup>61</sup>
- (iv) *Servitudes.* The Roman law of servitudes has left its mark on the modern law. In all civil law systems usufruct is the

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<sup>59</sup> Maine, *Ancient Law*, p. 104.

<sup>60</sup> Lee, p. 145.

<sup>61</sup> Now the same term bars the remedy and extinguishes the right. Limitation Act, 1939, s. 3 (2).

normal method of creating a life interest, and the praedial servitudes have a Roman complexion. Servitude is not a term of art in English Law, though it occurs in the Reports. Partly through Bracton and partly through texts of the Digest cited by Gale in his classic work on *Easements*, the rules of the Roman Law have "helped materially" to the making of the modern law.<sup>62</sup>

- (v) *Mortgage*. Until 1926 the English mortgage of land was in form not very different from the Roman *mancipatio cum fiducia* (§ 245), but had been wholly transformed, in effect, by the equity of redemption. The forms of legal mortgage of land are now statutory. A mortgage of movables is effected (a) by transferring the ownership, but not usually the possession, by way of security for the payment of money (bills of sale), or (b) by transferring the possession, but not the ownership (pawn or pledge). French Law arrives at similar results. It distinguishes hypothecation of immovables with registration and pledge (*gage*) of movables with delivery. In a limited number of cases movables can be pledged without delivery, but with conditions calculated to secure publicity.
- (vi) *Possession*. We have spoken above of the difference between the Roman and the English theory of possession. The French Law is essentially Roman. It denies possessory remedies to the mere *detenteur*, except in case of violent dispossession. The German and Swiss codes reject the Roman theory of possession and in this respect at least are nearer to English Law.
- (vii) *Possession makes title*. In French Law *en fait de meubles la possession vaut titre* (in the matter of movables possession is equivalent to title). This recalls the old adage *mobilia non habent sequelam*—movables cannot be followed. By the French Civil Code—(a) if I have parted with the possession of a corporeal movable voluntarily, as to a borrower, I cannot recover it from a third party who possesses in good faith; (b) if I have lost it, or if it has been stolen from me, I can recover it within three years, but not later.<sup>63</sup> The principle that movables cannot be followed is commonly said to be Germanic. In fact it existed in the laws of some but not all of the German nations. After the reception (§ 29) it was displaced by the Roman rule, *ubi rem meam invenio ibi vindico* (I vindicate my property where I find it). It was called back to life by the German Commercial Code of 1861 and adopted in the Civil Code of 1900.<sup>64</sup>

In English Law a bona fide possessor is (exceptions apart) exposed to an action of detinue or conversion until time has run in his favour.

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<sup>62</sup> Holdsworth, vii, 324.

<sup>63</sup> C. C. art. 2279.

<sup>64</sup> B. G. B. art. 932.

## BOOK III

### THE LAW OF SUCCESSION

#### I. SUCCESSION (IN GENERAL)

260. After treating of the modes of acquisition of single things Justinian goes on to speak of the modes of acquisition *per universitatem*, that is of the ways in which all the property of one person passed to another including, or together with, all transmissible rights and duties. Far the most important of these was inheritance, which is defined by Julian “as succession to the whole right of a deceased person”<sup>1</sup>; a phrase which must be understood to include whole liability as well. This took place equally under a will and upon intestacy, and the results were substantially the same, whether the succession devolved by civil law, or, under the name of possession of goods (*bonorum possessio*), was conferred by the praetor. The great importance of succession in the early law was its connection with religion. It was necessary that some one should replace the deceased in performing the duties of the family worship. At a later date another point of view asserted itself, namely, that creditors should know who to look to for payment of debts. 2. 9. 6.  
G. 2, 55.

261. There can be no doubt that in the earliest times testamentary succession as we understand it was unknown to the Romans (or to the stock from which they came) as it was unknown to the ancient Greeks and Germans. But we have no historical knowledge of such a state of things. The peculiarity of the Roman Law is that it developed the institution and regarded it as normal from an epoch which, in comparison with other systems of law, was relatively early. From the earliest times of which we have any record testamentary disposition in one form or another was permitted. The Law of the XII Tables recognised it as already in existence.<sup>2</sup>

*Institutes*, II. 9. 6.

This may serve for the present as regards the modes of acquisition of single things, for legacies and *fideicommissa*, by which also single things are acquired, will be more conveniently considered below. Let us now investigate the modes of universal

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<sup>1</sup> Dig. 50. 17. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Girard, p. 842.



§ 381.

acquisition. If you are made any one's heir or claim possession of a deceased person's goods, or 'adrogate anyone, or if a deceased person's goods are assigned to you in order to preserve the liberty of slaves, in all these cases such person's property passes to you in its entirety. Let us first consider inheritances, which may come to you either under a will, or upon an intestacy. We will speak first of testamentary inheritance, and begin by explaining how wills are made.

## II. TESTAMENTARY SUCCESSION

262. To speak, first, of testamentary succession, there are three principal requisites for the validity of a Roman will, viz.:—

- I. There must be a will valid *ab initio*;
- II. It must remain valid until the heir enters upon the inheritance;
- III. The heir must duly enter.

263. I. Initial validity of the Roman will. To constitute a will valid *ab initio*: A. The will must be made in proper form; B. An heir or heirs must be duly instituted; C. Testator, heir and witnesses must have testamentary capacity; D. Certain persons must be either instituted or disinherited.<sup>3</sup>

## III. THE FORMAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE ROMAN WILL

264. The following types of will were in use at different periods of Roman Law:—

(1) Testament made before the comitia (*testamentum comitiis calatis*). The comitia curiata met twice in the year for the purpose of making wills, and when it did so was known as comitia calata.<sup>4</sup> It seems probable that this type of will was, like adrogatio, a legislative act of the Roman People. There is in fact a close parallelism between the two institutions. As adrogatio effected an adoption *inter vivos*, so this testament effected an adoption *mortis causa*. Perhaps, originally, in the second case, as in the first, the design was to provide for the continuation of the family in the absence of male issue, and it may also have served to prefer one son to others as family successor.

265. (2) Testament made before the army (*testamentum in procinctu*). The word *procinctus*, Gaius says,<sup>5</sup> means "the army ready for battle", and this will was made "when the men were arming for battle". It consisted, as we learn from

<sup>3</sup> Hunter, p. 766.

<sup>4</sup> I.e., called or summoned.

<sup>5</sup> G. 2. 101.

other sources, in a declaration made before a few comrades in the interval between the first and second taking of the auspices.<sup>6</sup> It was more limited in its application than the later military will, for it was only made in the circumstances described. Both these types of will passed out of use before the end of the Republic.

266. (3) Testament by bronze and balance (*testamentum per aes et libram*). This was an adaptation to the purpose of will-making of the mancipatory sale. This is what Gaius says about it :—

“ Then there came to be a third kind of testament which is effected by bronze and balance; for if a person had not made his will in the *comitia calata* or in *procinctu* and was overtaken by the sudden menace of death he would mancipate his *familia*, that is his patrimony, to a friend and give instructions as to what he wanted given to each person after his death. This is called the testament *per aes et libram* because it is effected by mancipation. The first two kinds of will have passed out of use, but the third kind remains in force. However, it has quite changed its character. Formerly the *familiae emptor*, that is the person to whom the *familia* was mancipated, was in the position of heir, and that is why he received the testator's instructions as to what he wanted to go to each person after his death. But nowadays an heir is instituted by the will and charged with the payment of legacies, and another person comes in as *familiae emptor* to maintain the tradition of the old law, but merely as a matter of form.” G. 2. 103.

267. The mancipatory testament then consisted originally in the mancipation of a person's whole estate by act *inter vivos* to another person called the purchaser of the estate (*familiae emptor*). It was a public and irrevocable act of disposition by which the property vested immediately in the transferee subject to the duty, at first moral rather than legal, of disposing of it according to the testator's instructions and of discharging his debts. Later it changed its character. The *familiae emptor* became merely a figure-head, the real heir being named in a written instrument, which was not made public until after the testator's death.

In its developed form the process was as follows :—

(a) The testator commits his will to writing on tablets of wax; (b) in the presence of five witnesses, Roman citizens above the age of puberty, and a balance-holder (*libripens*) mancipates the inheritance to the *familiae emptor*, who, pronouncing a solemn formula, strikes the balance with a piece of bronze and hands it to the testator by way of price. G. 2. 104.

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<sup>6</sup> Jolowicz, p. 126.

The formula was as follows: "Thy estate (*familiam pecuniamque*) [I declare to be] at thy orders and in my keeping<sup>7</sup> and, that thou mayest lawfully make a testament according to the public statute, with this bronze (and as some add "with this bronze balance") be the same to me purchased".<sup>8</sup> The public statute is the Law of the XII Tables.

(c) The testator, holding the will in his hand, says: "As is written in these tablets of wax, so I give, so I bequeath, so I declare my will, and so do you, citizens, bear witness."

An alternative, but less frequent method, was for the testator to dispense with the tablets, and declare his will orally in the presence of the witnesses and the *libripens*. This implies some adaptation of the testator's declaration as given above. It was by a will of this kind that the dying Horace appointed Augustus his heir, "for he had not the strength to seal the tablets of the will".<sup>9</sup>

The mancipatory testament was not entirely superseded by the other forms to be presently mentioned. It continued to exist as a written instrument reciting the use of a ceremony, which in fact did not take place.<sup>10</sup>

268. The concise account which Gaius gives of the mancipatory will leaves much unexplained. It is clear that the other two forms of will were of limited use and that recourse was had to a device for which there are parallels in other times and other lands of making a disposition *inter vivos* take effect as a disposition *mortis causa*. Unlike the comital will, the whole purpose of which was to institute an heir, the mancipatory will was at first a legacy will, that is, disposed of specific things comprised in the dead man's estate. It is at least possible that it had existed in practice before the Law of the Twelve Tables, and that the famous clause

2. 22 pr.

*Uti legassit suae rei, ita jus esto*

"As a man has disposed of his property so be the law" gave it formal recognition. Later—perhaps under the influence of the priests, who would wish to focus the liability for the *sacra*—it became the means of disposing of the inheritance, and the *familiae emptor* became a useless formality.

269. All this is speculation. But so is everything which has been written on the subject of the early history of Roman wills. Contrary to the views expressed above it has been maintained on the one hand that the function of the People in

<sup>7</sup> There is some uncertainty as to the precise words used at this point owing to imperfections in the Verona MS.

<sup>8</sup> G. 2, 104.

<sup>9</sup> Suetonius, *Vita Horatii*. Cf. Dig. 28. 1. 21 pr.

<sup>10</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 285.

the comitial will was not to authorise it, but to witness its execution, and on the other that like the early mancipatory will the comitial will was a legacy will, which did not appoint an heir, but merely charged legacies upon the heir *ab intestato*. If this is so, the testamentary institution of an heir was a development, which came into use only in the later phase of the mancipatory will.<sup>11</sup>

270. (4) The Praetorian Testament. Strictly speaking, this was not a testament, for "the praetor cannot make an heir", but he could give possession of the estate (*bonorum possessio*), which came to have substantially the same effect. The praetor disregarded the solemnities of mancipation and was satisfied with an instrument executed in the presence of seven witnesses, who affixed their seals. The seven witnesses corresponded with the five witnesses of the mancipatory will together with the *libripens* and the *familiae emptor*, who having no longer an active part to play had sunk to the level of witnesses.<sup>12</sup> The sealing was not a praetorian innovation. Some unknown statute required it in the case of the mancipatory will, when committed to writing.<sup>13</sup> This was a necessary precaution in order to identify the instrument which the testator held in his hand at the moment of mancipation. The *bonorum possessio* granted by the praetor in these circumstances was at first provisional in character. It might be successfully challenged by the civil law heirs *ab intestato*. But a rescript of the Emperor Antoninus Pius made it an effectual answer to their claims to the inheritance. In technical language it was at first *sine re*—without abiding effect. It became *cum re*—with abiding effect.<sup>14</sup>

271. (5) Testamentum Tripertitum. This was the will of the later Empire prescribed by the Emperors Theodosius II and Valentinian III in A.D. 489. It was called "tripartite" because it was derived from three sources:—(a) The whole will must be made at one and the same time (*uno contextu*) in the presence of witnesses. This came from the civil law; (b) the witnesses must be seven in number and must seal the instrument. This came from the praetor's Edict; (c) the testator (or, if he is illiterate, another for him) and the witnesses must subscribe the will. This came from imperial constitutions. "Subscribing" meant something more than signing. It was the practice for the testator to make a formal acknowledgment

<sup>11</sup> Jolowicz discusses these questions p. 125 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Girard, p. 861, n. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Cicero (*in Verr.* 2 1. 45) says that the Edict of his time required *tabulas testamenti obsignatas non minus multis signis quam c lege oportet*.

<sup>14</sup> G. 2. 119—120.

of the will. The word "subscripsi"—I "have subscribed"—was enough, though other formulae might be employed. Similar declarations in writing were made by the witnesses. The document was then enclosed in a wrapper and sealed on the outside by the witnesses, who set their names against their respective seals (*supscriptiones*).<sup>15</sup>

2. 10 14. 272. (6) Nuncupative will. This was a declaration in the presence of seven witnesses replacing the oral mancipatory will (§ 267). It may have been allowed *jure praetorio* before Justinian gave it the effect of a civil law will.<sup>16</sup>

- 2 11 273. (7) Abnormal or irregular wills. There were, besides the above, a number of types of will applicable only to special classes of persons, or in special circumstances. In most of these the usual formalities were relaxed or dispensed with, but in some additional formalities were required. The most important of these was the military will, to be distinguished from the old *testamentum in procinctu*. This, introduced by Julius Caesar as a temporary concession,<sup>17</sup> became an established institution in the early Empire. A soldier (but, as Justinian enacted, only when on active service) might make his will as he pleased and as he could; it might be in a written instrument; it might be by an oral declaration in the presence of two or three comrades, it might be by tracing characters in his blood on scabbard or shield, or with sword in the dust.<sup>18</sup> Such a will, if the testator survived, remained valid for a year after honourable discharge from service. There were other cases in which the usual forms were dispensed with, *viz.* a will made in time of pestilence (witnesses need not be together at the same time); will made in the country (five witnesses sufficient); will of a parent disposing of property amongst his children (if holograph, *i.e.* written wholly in testator's hand, no witnesses required). On the other hand the will of a blind man required an eighth witness, the town secretary (*tabularius*) if available.<sup>19</sup>

274. (8) Finally, the later Empire admitted two public declarations of a man's last will, *viz.* a testament executed before a magistrate and lodged in Court, and a testament presented to the Emperor.

<sup>15</sup> Girard, p. 863; Buckl. T. p. 287, n. 1; and especially Roby I. 181.

<sup>16</sup> Cod. 6. 23. 26, *In testamentis sine scriptis faciendis omnem formalem observationem penitus amputamus*. Earlier texts are interpolated. Girard, p. 862, n. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Dig. 29. 1 pr.

<sup>18</sup> Cod. 6. 21. 15, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Inst. 2. 12. 4; Cod. 6. 22. 8.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK II (TITs. X and XI)

## TITLE X

*Of the execution of wills*

A testament is so called because it is evidence of a man's state of mind (*testatio mentis*).<sup>20</sup>

1. Not to neglect altogether our earliest institutions, it must be known that anciently there were two kinds of testament, of which § 264. one, known as the *testamentum calatis comitiis* was used in time of peace, the other termed *procinctum*<sup>21</sup> when men were making ready for battle. Then a third kind of testament came into use, which was known as the testament by bronze and balance; so called because it was effected by means of a mancipation, that is an imaginary sale, § 266. in the presence of five witnesses and a balance-holder, Roman citizens above the age of puberty, and another person known as the *familiae emptor*. The first two of these methods passed out of use in very early times: the third has persisted longer, but this too is partly disused.<sup>22</sup>

2. The above-mentioned types of will were creations of the civil law. Later, the praetor's edict introduced another way of making § 270. wills, for the *jus honorarium* did not require any mancipation, but was satisfied with the seals of seven witnesses, which by the civil law were not necessary.<sup>23</sup>

3. Gradually, however, partly by usage, partly by imperial constitutions, the civil law and the praetorian law were brought into harmony, and it was enacted that testaments should be made at one § 271. and the same time (which was required in a way by the civil law), with seven subscribing witnesses (an innovation of the imperial constitutions), and the seals of the witnesses (in accordance with the praetor's edict) so that the law on this subject seems to be derived from three sources. The witnesses and their being present all at once come from the civil law, the subscriptions of testator<sup>24</sup> and witnesses from the sacred constitutions, the sealing and the number of the witnesses from the praetor's edict.

4. To all this, to make sure that the will is genuine and for the avoidance of fraud, we have added in our constitution<sup>25</sup> the provision that the name of the heir is to be written by the hand of the

<sup>20</sup> A singularly absurd etymology.

<sup>21</sup> More correctly "in procinctu" (*supra*, § 265).

<sup>22</sup> This seems an understatement. The ceremonial part had been long since abolished. It became a question of a few words in a written instrument (§ 267).

<sup>23</sup> But see above § 270.

<sup>24</sup> Nov. Theod. 16. 1. 2; Cod. 6. 23. 21. If the will was holograph and declared to be so in the body of the will, an amending constitution (Cod. 6. 23. 28, 6) dispensed the testator from a further subscriptio—sufficiat ei totius testamenti scriptura et non alia subscriptio requiritur.

<sup>25</sup> Cod. 6. 23. 29.

testator, or of the witnesses,<sup>26</sup> and that everything must be done according to the tenor of the constitution.

5. All the witnesses may use a single seal, as Pomponius advised (Why not, if they may use seven seals identical in design?), and a witness may use another person's seal.

12. It is indifferent whether a will is written on tablets, paper, parchment or any other material.

13. A person may make his will in any number of originals, every one of which must be duly executed. This is sometimes necessary, if a testator is going on a sea-voyage and wishes to take one original with him and to leave another behind, and there are innumerable other circumstances of life which may render this course desirable.

§ 272. 14. So far we have spoken of wills committed to writing. But if any one wishes to make an oral will in accordance with the rules of the civil law, he may be assured that a declaration of his wishes made in the presence of seven witnesses is a perfectly good and unimpeachable testament.

## TITLE XI

### *Of the military testament*

Imperial constitutions have dispensed with the formalities described above in the wills of soldiers, who have no knowledge of legal technicalities. Accordingly soldiers can make a valid testament without the proper number of witnesses or the observance of any other solemnity, provided, that is (as our constitution<sup>27</sup> very properly prescribes) that they are on active service. So in whatever manner a soldier is found to have declared his last will, in writing or without writing, his testament holds good as an expression of his intentions. But when he is not on active service, or is in his own home, he cannot avail himself of this privilege. He may make a will, even if he is a son in power, but with the usual formalities required in the case of civilians. 1. The following rescript addressed by the Emperor Trajan to Statilius Severus is very much to the point:—

“The privilege accorded to soldiers of making their wills in any way they please must be understood in the sense that it must, of course, be established that there is in fact a will. (Civilians also may make a will without writing.) If, therefore, the soldier whose succession is in question, called together some comrades, with the intention of declaring his will, and then used words indicating that he wished such a person to be his heir, and such a slave to be free, it may be concluded that he made an oral will, and his intentions must take effect. But if, as may happen in the course of conversation, he said to someone ‘I make you my heir’ or ‘I leave you everything’ this must not be construed as a testament. It is in the interest of soldiers themselves that nothing of the kind should be admitted. Otherwise it will

<sup>26</sup> This was abrogated by Nov. 119. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Cod. 6. 21. 17.

be easy for people to come forward after a soldier's death and say that they heard him declare that he left his property to any person they choose to name, and so his real intentions would be frustrated."

2. (A soldier who is deaf or dumb can make a will.)

3. But the imperial constitutions allow soldiers this privilege only so long as they are serving, and in camp. If veterans make a will after their discharge from the army, or if soldiers in service make a will away from camp, they must observe the usual formalities. If they make a soldier's will in camp it holds good only for one year after their discharge. Suppose, then, a soldier dies within the year, but a condition is attached to the institution of an heir, which takes effect only after the year, is this valid as a military testament? It is decided that it is valid. 4. If before he was a soldier a man has made a will without observing the proper forms, and then while a soldier and on active service has broken the seals, and has made some addition, or cancelled some disposition, or in any other way manifested his intention that the instrument should take effect as a soldier's will, it must be pronounced valid as being in effect a new will made by a soldier.

5. If a soldier who is *sui juris* allows himself to be adrogated, or a soldier who is a *filiusfamilias* is emancipated, a testament previously made holds good as a fresh declaration of a soldier's intention and is not deemed to be invalidated by the change of status.

[For section 6 of this Title, see p. 200.]

#### IV. INSTITUTION OF HEIRS

275. An heir or heirs must be duly instituted. This was essential. The institution of an heir was the essence and foundation of the whole testament (*caput et fundamentum totius testamenti*). The following points, in particular, are to be noticed.

276. (a) Form of institution. The solemn form was "Be Titius my heir" (*Titius heres esto*); and, says Gaius, the form "I direct Titius to be my heir" (*Titium heredem esse jubeo*) seems now to be approved, but not "I wish Titius to be my heir" (*Titium heredem esse volo*); and the forms "I institute Titius my heir" or "I make Titius my heir" (*Titium heredem instituo—facio*) are generally disapproved.<sup>28</sup> In the later law this insistence on form was relaxed. Constantius and Constans A.D. 339 enacted that any form of words would avail which clearly expressed the testator's intention,<sup>29</sup> and Theodosius II and Valentinian III A.D. 439 allowed wills to be made in Greek.<sup>30</sup>

277. (b) Place of institution in the will. The institution of

<sup>28</sup> G. 2. 117.

<sup>29</sup> Cod. 6. 23. 15.

<sup>30</sup> Cod. 6. 23. 21, 6.



the heir had to come first, because everything else depended upon it. Consequently, a legacy or a gift of freedom which preceded the institution of the heir was of no effect. This requirement was rendered unnecessary by Justinian.<sup>31</sup>

2. 14. 5. 278. (c) The institution must be to the whole inheritance, for no one can die partly testate, partly intestate.<sup>32</sup> An exception was admitted in the case of the military will. A consequence of the rule was that if an heir was instituted to a fraction of the estate, *e.g.* to one half, and no disposition was made of the other half, he took this half also and was regarded as sole heir. The same situation arose if for any reason a co-heir failed to take. The other or others took the lapsed share by accrual (*jure adcrescendi*). Nor was the result different if a testator had named a person heir to some specific thing, *e.g.* to his estate at Capua. The limitation was taken *pro non scripto* (*detracta fundi mentione*).<sup>33</sup> Under Justinian, if one person was instituted *ex re certa* and another generally, the first institution was treated as a legacy, and other ways had been found of giving effect to a testator's intention.<sup>34</sup>

2. 14. 9. 279. (d) An institution might be absolute or conditional, *i.e.* it might be subject to a suspensive condition (*e.g.* be Titius my heir if he has married my daughter within a year of my death),<sup>35</sup> but not to a resolutive condition (*e.g.* be Titius my heir: if he has not married my daughter within a year of my death, be Sempronius my heir); nor to take effect from a fixed date or to a fixed date (*ex die—ad diem*). This would be contrary to the rule "once an heir, always an heir" (*semel heres, semper heres*).<sup>36</sup> One consequence was that an inheritance could not be limited to shift over from one person to another. But under the Empire this was surmounted by means of *fideicommissa*, and it did not apply to military wills. If an institution was expressed to take effect from an event which must occur, but at an uncertain date, *e.g.* be Titius my heir when Seius dies (*dies certus an—incertus quando*), it was construed as a suspensive condition and free from objection. Any prohibited condition or time limit attached to the institution was ignored. It was taken "*pro non scripto*".

<sup>31</sup> G. 2. 229, 230; Inst. 2. 20. 34.

<sup>32</sup> The origin of this rule is much discussed. If it is primitive (which some deny) it points to a time when what passed on death was a thing from its nature indivisible, the headship of the family. Maine, *Ancient Law*, p. 203.

<sup>33</sup> Dig. 28. 5. 1, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Cod. 6. 24. 13. Further particulars in Buckl. *T.* p. 296.

<sup>35</sup> As to the position pending the condition, see Moyle *ad Inst.* 2. 14. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Dig. 28. 5. 89.

280. (e) A testator might institute one heir or several heirs. If several, they might be instituted to equal shares or to any shares the testator pleased. According to the Roman method of calculation the whole inheritance was a single unit represented in terms of the standard pound weight, the *as* or *libra*. A sole heir was said to be heir to the whole pound—*heres ex asse*. If the inheritance was distributed amongst co-heirs, their shares were usually calculated in terms of ounces (*unciae*) or twelfths. An heir who took one twelfth was said to be heir to one ounce (*heres ex uncia*) and so forth. But it was essential that the whole estate should be distributed somehow, for as explained above, no one could die partly testate, partly intestate. If a testator said, “Be Titius and Sempronius my heirs. Be Titius my heir to one half”, and forgot to say what share Sempronius was to take, he took the other half. It is unnecessary to enter into the problems of calculation which are considered in the text. A testator was not obliged to distribute his estate in twelfths. He might divide it into fifths or sevenths or fifteenths or any other fractions he pleased. But the fraction was still called an ounce. The ideal pound might consist of as many ounces as the testator pleased.<sup>37</sup> 2. 14. 5.

281. (f) A testator might institute a free man duly qualified to be instituted (a condition which will be explained below, § 298)—or a slave, his own or some one else’s. If his own, the old law required together with the institution an express gift of liberty, but Justinian gave authority to the more indulgent view that the institution in itself imported a gift of liberty. If another person’s slave was instituted he acquired the inheritance for his master by accepting at his order, provided that the master was qualified. It may be asked why the testator should institute a slave instead of instituting the master directly. The answer is that the institution of a slave had certain practical advantages; in particular the law forbade any kind of traffic in the succession to a living person, but the slave with the prospect of succeeding formed part of the estate of his master, who could manumit, if he chose (in which case the manumitted slave might accept the inheritance for his own account), or dispose of him *inter vivos* or by will. The slave became, so to say, a promissory note entitling the holder to claim the inheritance upon the testator’s death. 2. 14 pr. 2. 14 1.

<sup>37</sup> Instances in Hunter, pp. 762–3.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK II

## TITLE XIV

*Of the institution of heirs*

§ 281.

One may institute as heirs free men or slaves, one's own or some one else's. Formerly, the prevailing opinion was that one could not institute one's own slave without a gift of liberty. But now by our constitution<sup>38</sup> this is no longer necessary. This is no innovation, for it was only reasonable, and Paulus in his commentaries on Masurius Sabinus and on Plautius says that Atilicinus<sup>39</sup> was of this opinion. A man's own slave is understood to include a slave of whom he has the bare ownership, while another person has the usufruct. There is one case in which an owner cannot institute a slave heir even with a gift of liberty, as appears from a constitution of the Emperors Severus and Antoninus to the following effect:— "If a slave is charged with committing adultery with his mistress he cannot, pending sentence, be manumitted by the will of the woman who is charged with complicity in the same crime; from which it follows that his institution as heir is without effect."<sup>40</sup> The expression "some one else's slave" is understood to include a slave in whom the testator has a usufruct. 1. A slave instituted heir by his master, becomes free and a necessary heir (§ 321) by force of the testament, if his condition has remained unchanged. If he has been manumitted by the testator in his lifetime, he may accept or decline the inheritance, as he pleases, for he is not regarded as a necessary heir, since he is not freed as well as instituted by his master's will. But if his master has alienated him, he must enter upon the inheritance by the order of his new master, who consequently becomes heir. The slave himself, having been alienated, cannot become free or heir under his (late) master's will, although he may have been instituted heir with an express gift of liberty; for when he alienated him his master is deemed to have abandoned his purpose of setting him free. If another person's slave is instituted heir and his position has remained unchanged, he must accept the inheritance at the bidding of his master. If he has been alienated in the testator's lifetime or, after the testator's death before he has accepted the inheritance, he must accept at the bidding of his new master. If he has been manumitted in the testator's lifetime or after his death before acceptance he may accept or decline the inheritance as he pleases on his own account.

§ 129.

2. Another person's slave may be properly instituted heir after his master's death, because it is competent to institute a slave belonging to an inheritance; for a vacant inheritance represents the person not of the future heir, but of the deceased. The slave of an unborn child may also be instituted heir.

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<sup>38</sup> Cod. 6. 27. 5.

<sup>39</sup> All these jurists belong to the first century. Atilicinus was later than Sabinus (after whom the Sabinian school was named, § 28). Plautius was the latest of the three.

<sup>40</sup> Dig. 28. 5. 49 (48), 2.

3. If a slave belonging to several masters, with all of whom there is *testamenti factio* is instituted heir by a stranger, he acquires for each of the masters at whose bidding he accepts in proportion to the share in which they are severally owners. § 293.

4. A testator may institute a single heir or as many heirs as he pleases without limit. 5. The inheritance is commonly divided into twelve ounces, which together make up the *as* or pound. These fractions of the pound are distinguished by appropriate names from the single ounce up to the complete pound. Thus we employ the terms *uncia* (one ounce), *sextans* (two ounces or one sixth), *quadrans* (three ounces or a quarter), *triens* (four ounces or a third), *quincunx* (five ounces or five twelfths), *semis* (six ounces or one half), *septunx* (seven ounces or seven twelfths), *bes* (eight ounces or two thirds), *dodrans* (nine ounces or three quarters), *decunx* (ten ounces or five sixths), *deunx* (eleven ounces or eleven twelfths), and *as*, which comprises the whole inheritance. It is not obligatory that the estate should contain twelve ounces. The number of ounces which go to the pound is just what the testator pleases. For example if a man institutes a sole heir to the half, the half is understood to comprise the whole, for no one can die partly testate and partly intestate, unless he be a soldier, in whose case it is simply a question of what he intends. Conversely, a testator may divide the inheritance into any number of ounces more than twelve. 6. In case of plurality of institutes, there is no question of distribution of shares unless the testator does not wish them to take equal shares, for it is well established that if no shares are mentioned all the heirs take equally. It may happen that some of the heirs are instituted to specified shares, and that there is another heir to whom no share is assigned; then if the specified shares do not make up a whole *as* he takes what is wanting to make up the twelve ounces; if there are more than one heir with no assigned shares, they divide the residue between them. If the whole *as* has been distributed, the heirs with assigned shares take half the estate, the other half goes to the heir or heirs with unassigned share or shares. It makes no difference whether the heir without an assigned share comes first or middle or last amongst the instituted heirs. In any case he takes the vacant share. § 280.

7. Now let us see what happens if there is a vacant share, but every heir has had a share assigned to him; if, for example, three persons have been instituted each to a quarter. It is settled that the vacant share accedes rateably to the instituted heirs and the result is the same as if they had each been instituted to one third. Conversely, if more than twelve ounces have been distributed, each share is rateably reduced, for example, four heirs have been instituted to one third each, the result is the same as if each had been instituted to one quarter.

8. If more ounces than twelve have been distributed, the heir who has no share assigned him takes what is wanting to make up the second pound, and similarly if the second pound is exhausted. But all these shares are ultimately reduced to a single *as*, whatever may

be the number of ounces [so that what each heir takes is always represented as a fraction of the *as*].

§ 279 9. An heir may be instituted unconditionally or conditionally; not from a certain time or to a certain time, for instance, "be he heir from five years after my death", or "from or to the kalends of such a month". It is settled that such an added date is disregarded, and that the result is the same as if the heir had been instituted in absolute terms.

10. In institutions, legacies, fideicommissa and grants of liberty an impossible condition is taken *pro non scripto*. 11. When several conditions are attached to an institution conjunctively expressed, as "if this *and* that be done", both or all of them must be satisfied; but if they are separate conditions, as "if this *or* that be done", it is enough to satisfy any one of them.

12. A testator may institute as heirs persons whom he has never seen, for example a brother's sons born abroad, though he does not know them; for a testator's want of knowledge does not render the institution void.

#### V. SUBSTITUTION OF HEIRS (VULGAR—PUPILLARY—EXEMPLARY)

2. 15 pr 282. If a person was instituted as sole heir and for any reason could not, or did not, accept the inheritance, the will failed and the property went to the heirs *ab intestato*. To avoid such a catastrophe, it was usual for testators after instituting an heir, to substitute another who was to take, if the first heir did not. This was known as ordinary or vulgar substitution (*substitutio vulgaris*). The form would be: "Be Titius my heir; if Titius shall not be my heir, then be Maevius my heir". The same rules applied to substitutions as to institutions. Thus a testator might name one substitute or several substitutes, and he might name several substitutes to one institute ("Be Titius my heir: if Titius shall not be my heir, be Seius and Sempronius my heirs"), or one substitute to several institutes ("Be Titius and Seius my heirs; if Titius and Seius shall not be my heirs, be Sempronius my heir"); or he might substitute the institutes reciprocally one to another ("Be Titius my heir to half; be Seius my heir to half. If Titius shall not be my heir, be Seius my heir; if Seius shall not be my heir be Titius my heir"). It was usual to name several substitutes one after another and last of all a slave of the testator, who because he could not refuse the inheritance was known as necessary heir (*heres necessarius*, § 321).

283. In the old law it was the practice to fix a time limit, usually of one hundred days, within which the heir was to make a formal acceptance, with the addition that if he failed

to do so, he was to be disinherited and a substitute was to take the inheritance in his place.<sup>41</sup> This formal acceptance was known as *cretio* from the Latin verb *cernere*=to decide. The practice had fallen into disuse before Justinian, who formally abolished it.<sup>42</sup> It may be assumed, though there is no text, that the *substitutus* might, if there was undue delay, require the *institutus* to ask for a *spatium deliberandi* (§ 323).

284. Besides the ordinary or vulgar substitution, there was another substitution known as pupillary substitution. This took place when a *paterfamilias* appointed a child in power his heir and provided a substitute not only for the event of such child not being his heir, but also for the event of his becoming heir and dying before puberty, *i.e.* before acquiring testamentary capacity on his own account. The formula was—  
 “Be my son Titius my heir: if my son Titius shall not be my heir, or shall be my heir and die before he becomes his own guardian, then be Scius heir”. In this case, as Gaius and Justinian observe, there are, in effect, two wills, or one will disposing of two inheritances, for the testator provides for succession not to his own estate alone, but to his son’s as well. At first this form of substitution was employed only if the child was instituted, and related only to property derived from the testator, but later the principle was carried so far that a *paterfamilias* might disinherit his son and still provide for the devolution of the son’s estate, for example, property left to him by his mother after testator’s death, in the event of his dying under the age of puberty. But the father could not make a will for his child unless at the same time he made a will for himself, for the pupillary testament was regarded as part of and accessory to the will of the parent. In a famous case of the time of Sulla (*causa Curiana*)<sup>43</sup> the question was whether a pupillary substitution implied also a direct substitution. Under the Empire, it was held that it did so, and conversely, a direct substitution was understood to imply a pupillary substitution in the absence of the expression of a contrary intention.<sup>44</sup>

285. Justinian extended the principle of pupillary substitution to descendants who were insane. This has been termed quasi-pupillary or exemplary (*i.e.* analogous) substitution. It was more restricted in its application than pupillary substitution, because the testator could not substitute any one he

<sup>41</sup> G. 2. 165.

<sup>42</sup> By interpolation in a constitution of A.D. 407 (Cod. 6. 30. 17); Giraud p. 924, n. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Cic. *de Orat.* I. 180; II. 141.

<sup>44</sup> Dig. 28. 6. 4 pr.

pleased. He had to appoint certain persons, viz descendants and, failing such, brothers and sisters of the insane person. Only in default of these, the choice was unrestricted. On the other hand the power of appointment might be exercised by any ascendant, e.g. a mother, who instituted the insane person heir, and not by the paterfamilias alone.

### THE INSTITUTES

#### BOOK II (TITS. XV and XVI)

##### TITLE XV

##### *Of vulgar substitution*

§ 282. A testator may make several persons heirs in succession, for instance "if such a person shall not be heir, be such other person heir", and so on, as often as he pleases; last of all he may institute his slave as necessary heir. 1. Several persons may be substituted to one person, or one person to several persons; or each heir may have a separate substitute, or again heirs may be substituted reciprocally, one to another. 2. If heirs instituted in unequal shares are reciprocally substituted and nothing is said about shares in the substitution it is understood that the testator meant the substituted heir to take the same share as the heir in whose place he is substituted. This was decided by the Emperor Pius. 3. If one co-heir has a substitute and is himself substituted to the other co-heir [and both co-heirs fail to take] the substitute is understood to be entitled without distinction to both parts of the inheritance. So decided by the Emperors Severus and Antoninus.<sup>45</sup> 4. If a testator has instituted another man's slave, believing him to be sui juris, and has substituted Maevius in the event of the slave so instituted not being heir; then, if the slave enters on the inheritance at his master's bidding, Maevius is admitted to half. For the words "if he shall not be heir", in case the testator knows that the person concerned is alieni juris, mean "if he is neither heir himself nor the means of some other person becoming heir"; but, if the testator supposed the person instituted to be an independent person, then the words mean "if he shall not have acquired the inheritance for himself or for any other person into whose power he may afterwards fall". This was decided by the Emperor Tiberius in the case of his slave Parthenius.<sup>46</sup>

##### TITLE XVI

##### *Of pupillary substitution*

§ 284. If a person has children in his power who are below the age of puberty he may appoint a substitute not only for the event of their

<sup>45</sup> This decision gave occasion for the rule *substitutus substituto est substitutus instituto*.

<sup>46</sup> The argument is not very logical. What is meant is that, since the testator never contemplated the actual situation, there is a case for an equitable adjustment of the claims of both parties concerned.

not being heirs but also for the event of their being heirs and dying under puberty. For example, "Be my son Titius my heir; if my son shall not be my heir, or if he shall be my heir and shall die before he becomes his own guardian (that is reaches puberty), then be Seius heir". In this case if the son is not heir, then the substitute is heir to the father; but if the son is heir and dies before puberty, then the substitute is heir to the son. This is an institution which owes its origin to custom, namely that if children are too young to make wills for themselves, their parents should make wills for them.

1. Moved by this consideration we have placed a constitution<sup>47</sup> in § 285. our code providing that if a person has a son or other descendant of either sex and of any degree of descent who is not sane, he may substitute certain persons to him on the analogy of pupillary substitution; if he recovers his sanity, the substitution is cancelled just as it is in the case of pupillary substitution when the child reaches the age of puberty. 2. Accordingly, in pupillary substitution as above described there are, in a way, two wills, the father's will and the son's will, just as if the son had himself instituted an heir; or, we may say, if we please, that there is one testament with two aspects, that is, involving two inheritances.

3. If a person is afraid that after his death his minor son may be imperilled from its being known who is to take the inheritance in the event of his death, he should make the vulgar substitution openly in the first part of his will, and the pupillary substitution lower down in another part of the will, which is separately fastened and sealed; and he should insert in the first part of the will a direction that the lower part is not to be opened while the child is alive and under puberty. It is obvious that the pupillary substitution is not invalid if it is written on the same tablets as those in which the testator appoints his own heir, though this may be unsafe for the child. 4. Parents may substitute to their children as above described not only when the children are heirs to their parents, but even when they are disinherited; in which case if anything comes to the child by inheritance, legacy or gifts from relatives and friends, it all goes to the substitute, [if the child dies under puberty]. Whatever is said of children must be understood to include after-born children. 5. No one can make a testament for his children, unless he also makes a testament for himself, for the child's testament is a part and consequence of the father's testament; so that if the father's will is invalid, the son's will is invalid too. 6. Substitution may be made to each child severally, or to the child who is the last to die under puberty. The first method is adopted if the testator does not wish any one of the children to die intestate; the second, if he is content that as between themselves the law of intestate succession should prevail.

7. The substitute may be described by name or in general terms, e.g. "whoever shall be my heir"; in which case if the child dies under puberty, the substitutes in his estate are the persons who are

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<sup>47</sup> Cod. 6. 26. 9.



will was a penalty imposed by legislation, *e.g.* in the older law upon the author of defamatory writings (*carmen famosum*)<sup>56</sup> and in the late Empire upon certain heretics and apostates.

292. (5) Women could not take part in the business of the *comitia* and therefore could not make a will *comitiis calatis*; the mancipatory will they could, provided that they were *sui juris* and had anything to dispose of. But in order to obtain testamentary capacity they had to break away from their agnatic family by means of the fictitious coemption described by Gaius (§ 112), the object of which was to give the woman a fiduciary tutor, by whose authority she could make a will. Why her original tutor, whose authority in any event was necessary to enable her to make the coemption, could not equally give validity to her will remains obscure.<sup>57</sup> This tiresome formality was rendered unnecessary by the Emperor Hadrian,<sup>58</sup> though only to be replaced by the requirement of the tutor's authority so long as the perpetual tutelage of women remained in force. This was a reality in the case of the *legitima tutela* of parents and patrons. In other cases it could be compelled (§ 125). None of these restrictions upon testamentary capacity applied to women with the *jus liberorum* (§ 125) or to the praetorian will.<sup>59</sup> The last vestiges of any testamentary disability of women had disappeared long before Justinian.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II (TIT. XII, TIT. XI, sec. 6)

#### TITLE XII

#### *Who are not permitted to make a will*

289.

Not every one can make a will. In the first place, those who are under power have not this right, so much so that even if their parents give them leave, this does not any the more give them testamentary capacity, except always in the cases mentioned above, and particularly in the case of soldiers in the power of parents who by imperial constitutions are permitted to make wills of their *castrense*

<sup>56</sup> Ulpian attributes this to a *senatusconsultum* (Dig. 28. 1. 18, 1). The Twelve Tables punished (with scourging?) the author of a *malum carmen*—*qui malum carmen incantassit*. This may refer to some form of magical incantation. Girard, p. 428, n. 4. It was misunderstood, even in the Augustan age, as appears from Horace, *Sat.* 2. 1. 82; *Epp.* 2. 1. 152. Another view is that both *malum carmen* (incantation) and *carmen famosum* (libel or vituperation) were punished by the Twelve Tables. Perhaps the idea of cursing is present in both.

<sup>57</sup> For a probable explanation, see Buckl. *T.* p. 120, n. 1.

<sup>58</sup> G. 2. 112; Ulp. XX. 15.

<sup>59</sup> G. 2. 119, 120.

peculium. At first this privilege was allowed only to men on actual service by the Emperors Augustus, Nerva, and Trajan, but afterwards by a rescript of the Emperor Hadrian it was accorded also to men who had received their discharge. Accordingly, if they have made a will of their *castrense peculium* it goes to the heir instituted in the will, but if they die intestate without leaving children or brothers [or sisters]<sup>60</sup> to survive them, it belongs to the parents on general principles of law [as *peculium*].<sup>61</sup> From this it may be understood that what a soldier in power has acquired on service his father cannot take from him, nor can the father's creditors sell it, or interfere with it in any way, and when the father dies he does not share it with his brothers; in fact what he acquires on service is his property, though at civil law the *peculia* of sons in power belong to their parents, just as the *peculia* of slaves belong to their masters, with the exception of things which by imperial constitutions and in particular by our legislation are for various reasons not acquired by the parent. With the exception, therefore, of those who have *castrense peculium* or quasi-*castrense peculium*, if any son in power makes a testament it is without effect, even though he may die *sui juris*. 1. Further, children below the age of puberty cannot make a will, because they have no judgment; nor madmen, because they are devoid of reason: and it makes no difference if the child afterwards reaches the age of puberty or the madman afterwards becomes sane. However, if a madman makes a will in a lucid interval, it is deemed to be valid, and certainly wills made before insanity supervened remain valid, for neither wills nor any other transactions duly completed are avoided by supervening insanity. § 290.

2. Again, a prodigal who has been interdicted from the management of his property cannot make a will, but a will made before the interdiction is upheld. 3. Again, a person who is deaf or dumb cannot always make a will. We refer, of course, to a person who is completely deaf, not to a person who is hard of hearing; just as by a dumb person we mean one who cannot speak at all, not one who is slow of speech. But it often happens that educated and learned men for one reason or another lose the use of hearing and speech. Accordingly, our constitution<sup>62</sup> has come to their aid, allowing them to make wills and perform other permitted acts in the cases and in the ways therein set forth. If after making his will a person becomes dumb or deaf from ill health or any other cause, his will none the less remains valid. § 290.

4. A blind man cannot make a will except in the way prescribed by our father the Emperor Justin.<sup>63</sup> 5. If a man taken captive by the enemy makes a will while in captivity it is invalid, even though he comes back. But a will made before capture, if he comes back is valid *jure postliminii*; if he dies in captivity, by the *lex Cornelia*. § 288.

<sup>60</sup> *Arg. Cod. 6. 61. 4.*

<sup>61</sup> *Dig. 49. 17. 2.* Or by inheritance? *Buckl. T. p. 376*

<sup>62</sup> *Cod. 6. 22. 10.*

<sup>63</sup> *Cod. 6. 22. 8.*

7. When one of the witnesses at the time of the execution of the will was thought to be free, and was afterwards found to be a slave, the Emperor Hadrian in his rescript to Catonius Verus, and afterwards the Emperors Severus and Antoninus by rescript declared that they would graciously come to the aid of the will, and that it should be deemed to be validly executed, since at the time of its execution the witness was generally supposed to be free and no one had challenged his status.

8. A father and a male descendant in his power, or two brothers in the same power, may join in witnessing a will, for there is no harm in several witnesses to a stranger's will being taken from the same family. 9. But a person in a testator's power may not be a witness, and if a soldier after taking his discharge makes a will of his *castrense peculium*, his father cannot be a witness, nor any one in his father's power, for members of the same family as the testator are not admissible witnesses. 10. Neither may the heir, nor a descendant in his power, nor the ascendant in whose power he is, nor brothers in the same power with himself, be witnesses, for today the whole business of will-making is deemed to be a proceeding between the heir and the testator. Formerly there was much confusion in this branch of the law, and the old jurists, while they did not allow § 266. the *familiae emptor* and those related to him by power to be witnesses, raised no objection to the heir and those related to him by power being witnesses, though urging that the right should not be abused. We have given their recommendation the force of law and applied the same rule to the heir and his connections as was anciently applied in the case of the *familiae emptor*, to whose place the heir has succeeded. 11. Legatees and fideicommissaries, not being universal successors, and person connected with them are not debarred from being witnesses. Indeed one of our constitutions<sup>74</sup> expressly allows them to be so.

295. A person might have *testamenti factio* in the sense that he could be instituted heir (so-called *testamenti factio passiva*) and a will instituting him would be a valid will, and yet might not be able to take under the will, or might be able to take, but not to keep. These cases are the subject of the next three sections.

#### VII. JUS CAPIENDI—CADUCA—EREPTORIA

296. There were cases in which by statute law an *institutus* was denied the *jus capiendi*—the right of taking under a will. By the *lex Junia* a Junian Latin was under this disability unless he acquired Roman citizenship within one hundred days after the "delation" of the inheritance (§ 323).<sup>75</sup> By the marriage laws of Augustus—the *lex Julia* 18 B.C. and the *lex Papia Poppaea* A.D. 9—unmarried persons, males over twenty-

<sup>74</sup> Not extant.

<sup>75</sup> G. I. 23, 24; Ulp. XVII, 1.

five and under sixty, females over twenty and under fifty (caelibes) and childless married persons (orbi) were penalised unless they qualified by marriage (or by birth of issue?) within the same limit of time, the first by the loss of the whole, the second by the loss of half the inheritance. The inheritance, or half of it, as the case might be, fell vacant (caducum) and went to other persons benefited by the will as heirs or legatees who were married and had children, and failing such to the Treasury (aerarium, later fiscus).<sup>76</sup> But if the heir was within the sixth degree of relationship to the testator<sup>76a</sup> these disabilities had no application, and there were other exemptions. We might well be amazed that a penal law so diluted in its effect should have been calculated to encourage marriage, were it not that the legacy hunter is a familiar figure in the pages of the Latin satirists. Though Horace invited the blessing of the goddess Lucina on the marriage law,<sup>77</sup> it may be questioned whether it was more successful than such attempts "to make men good by Act of Parliament" have proved in other ages and other lands.<sup>78</sup> But these "leges caducariae" remained on the statute book until abrogated by Constantine in A.D. 320.<sup>79</sup>

297. Another case of caducity, which is worth mentioning, as it has been the occasion of many decisions in the South African Courts, was created by the senatusconsultum Libonianum of A.D. 16 and an edict of the Emperor Claudius.<sup>80</sup> These enactments forbade any person to write a benefit for himself in another person's will even at the testator's dictation. Transgressors incurred the penalties of the lex Cornelia de falsis (Inst. 4.18.7) and the disposition was taken pro non scripto. It will be remembered that in English Law an attesting witness of a will or codicil (and his or her wife or husband) cannot take any beneficial interest in property thereunder.<sup>81</sup>

298. There were cases in which a person might be instituted and might take, but could not keep. This happened when the heir was deemed "unworthy" of the intended benefit, which by consequence was "snatched from him" and as a rule escheated to the Treasury. There were many such cases. The most flagrant instance was when the heir had culpably caused testator's death; and it may be observed that the same rule exists in English Law. The commentators have

<sup>76</sup> Ulp. XVI, 1, XVII, XVIII; Buckl. T. pp. 319, 320.

<sup>76a</sup> Or the seventh in the case of the issue of second cousins Vat. 216.

<sup>77</sup> *Carmen Seculare*.

<sup>78</sup> Professor Last in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. x, p. 455. writes: "Nor was the work a failure".

<sup>79</sup> Cod. 8. 57 (58). 1.

<sup>80</sup> Dig. 34. 8; Cod. 9. 23. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Wills Act. 1837, s. 15.

given to this kind of forfeiture the name of *ereption* on the ground of indignity.<sup>82</sup>

### VIII. WHO MUST BE INSTITUTED OR DISINHERITED

299. Certain persons must be instituted or disinherited :—

- (1) By civil law sons in power must be either instituted or disinherited in express terms (*nominatim*). The proper form of disherison was, “Be my son Titius disinherited” (*Titius filius meus exheres esto*), or simply, “Be my son disinherited” (*Filius meus exheres esto*) when there was only one. If the testator failed to institute or disinherit a son in power, the will was invalid. This was the case even though the son died subsequently to the will but before the testator. The law was settled in this sense in accordance with the Sabinian doctrine. The Proculians had maintained that the will was valid, on the ground that the omission of the son did not render the will void *ab initio*, but only in the event of the son’s survival. Other descendants in power, who on the testator’s death would be his *sui heredes*, must also be instituted or disinherited, but in their case a general clause of disherison—“Be all the rest disinherited” (*ceteri omnes exheredes sunt*)—was sufficient. This applied to daughters and to the children of sons who owing to the death or emancipation<sup>83</sup> of their father were potential *sui heredes* of the testator. If they were passed over in silence the will was not void, but the person omitted was let in to share along with the instituted heirs, *i.e.* took a rateable share in competition with *sui heredes* instituted by the will and half of the inheritance if the person instituted was a stranger to the family (*extraneus*), which would include an emancipated son. Grandsons in power would take a son’s share between them as representing their deceased, or emancipated, father.

300. (2) The praetor extended the rule requiring institution or disherison to include all descendants whom he admitted to intestate succession in the class *unde liberi* (§ 374). This meant that he ignored emancipation and placed emancipated sons and their issue in the same position as *sui heredes*. He required all males (grandsons as well as sons) to be disinherited *nominatim*, females *inter ceteros*, failing which he gave them *bonorum possessio contra tabulas* (§ 373). The effect was to upset the will, not technically, but practically (for most pur-

<sup>82</sup> Dig. 34. 9; Cod. 6. 35. The word *ereptorium* occurs only in Ulp. XIX, 17.

<sup>83</sup> Provided that they were born or conceived before the father’s emancipation (§ 322).

poses),<sup>84</sup> and to admit to the succession not only the descendant who invoked the relief, but also all others entitled to succeed *ab intestato* who had not been duly disinherited (Disherisons were not affected by the grant of bonorum possessio). The praetor made no distinction between men and women, but the Emperor Antoninus Pius reverted to the rule of the civil law by providing that women were not to take more by bonorum possessio contra tabulas than they would have taken by right of accrual at civil law.<sup>85</sup>

301. (3) Justinian maintained the praetorian system, but with the more stringent requirement that every disherison must be made in express terms (*nominatim*). Failing this, the *sui heredes* could impeach the will as wholly void, other *liberi* could upset it by obtaining bonorum possessio contra tabulas. It is to be noticed that under Justinian adoptive children need not be taken into account (except in case of *adoptio plena*), because they did not any longer leave their family of origin (§ 105).<sup>86</sup> 2. 13. 5.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II

#### TITLE XIII

##### *Of the disherison of children*

It is not enough for the complete validity of a will to observe the forms above described. It is further necessary that a testator who has a son in power should take steps to institute him heir or to disinherit him specially. If he passes him over in silence the will is void, so much so that even if the son dies in his father's lifetime, no one can take as heir under the will, because the will was invalid from the beginning. In ancient times this did not apply in the case of daughters and the issue of sons and other descendants through males. If these were not instituted or disinherited, the will was not void, but they were allowed to take a certain portion of the inheritance. Further, it was not required that such persons should be disinherited specially. They might be excluded in general terms. 1. A special disherison is expressed in the formula, "Be my son Titius disinherited" or "Be my son disinherited" without naming him, that is, in case there is only one son. Posthumous children too should be either instituted or disinherited. With regard to them there is no difference between sons and other descendants of either sex. The will is valid *ab initio*. But as soon as a child of either sex is born into the family, the will is broken and wholly fails to § 299.

<sup>84</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 198.

<sup>85</sup> *G.* 2. 126.

<sup>86</sup> *Inst.* 2. 13. 5. *in fine*.

take effect. (No such consequence follows if a woman suffers a miscarriage.) The practice used to be that females born after the will might be disinherited either specially, or by a general clause, provided in the latter case that they received some legacy to show that they had not been overlooked; but male descendants (sons and remoter descendants) had to be disinherited in express terms by the formula "If any son be hereafter born to me, be he disinherited". 2. Under the general description of "posthumous" are included descendants who take the place of a *suus heres*, and are, so to say, by an after-birth<sup>87</sup> brought into the position of *sui heredes*. For instance, if a person has in his power a son and a grandson or grand-daughter by that son, as the son is in the first degree of descent, he alone has the position of *suus heres*, though the grandchildren are in the same power. But if the son dies or in any way goes out of his father's power in the father's lifetime, his children take his place and are in the position of *sui heredes* just as if they had been newly born into the family. Accordingly, just as it is necessary to institute or disinherit a son specially to prevent the will being void from the beginning, so it is necessary to institute or disinherit grandchildren by a son, lest if the son dies in the testator's lifetime they should take his place and break the will by being (so to say) born into the family. This is provided by the *lex Junia Velleia*, which also indicated a mode of disinheritance appropriate to such cases.<sup>88</sup>

§ 300.

3. By civil law emancipated children need not be instituted or disinherited, because they are not *sui heredes*. But the praetor requires all children of either sex who are not instituted to be disinherited, males specially, females specially or by a general clause. If they are neither instituted nor disinherited in the manner described, he promises them possession of goods against the will. 4. Adoptive children, so long as they are in the power of their adoptive father, are in the same position as children born in wedlock, and, therefore, must be instituted or disinherited, as described above. But if they are emancipated by their adoptive father they are not reckoned as children either at civil law or by the praetor's edict. Conversely, so long as they are in the adoptive family they are strangers to their natural parent, so that there is no need for him to institute or disinherit them. But when they have been emancipated by their adoptive father, they are in the same relation to their natural father as if he had emancipated them himself. 5. Such was the old law on the subject. But we, bearing in mind that both sexes contribute to the procreation of children and that neither the

<sup>87</sup> "quasi agnascendo". "by an event analogous to subsequent birth" (Moyle); "like the after-born" (Poste, Gaius, 2. 133).

<sup>88</sup> This is the situation dealt with in the second chapter of the *lex Junia Velleia* (A.D. 262). The order of events is—birth of grandchild, will of grandfather, death of father, death of grandfather. A person thus promoted by succession to the rank of *suus heres* is termed by the commentators a quasi-postumus. The first chapter of the *lex* related to one case of postumi properly so-called (persons born after the date of the will). The statute enacted that the will was not to be broken in either case if the person concerned had been instituted or disinherited by anticipation. See Poste, Gaius, p. 196.

Law of the Twelve Tables nor the praetor's edict makes any difference between them, have by our constitution<sup>89</sup> established one simple law § 301 applicable alike to sons and daughters and all descendants through males, unemancipated and emancipated, born or after-born, requiring them all to be instituted or individually disinherited with the same consequence of failure to do so in every one of these cases. With regard to adoptive children we have introduced a distinction which may be found in our constitution<sup>90</sup> on the subject of adoption. 6. But if a soldier on active service makes a will and has not individually disinherited his children born or after-born, but has passed them by in silence well knowing that he has children, imperial constitutions provide that his silence is equivalent to an express disinheritance.

7. Mothers and maternal grandparents have no need to institute or disinherit their children, but may omit to mention them. For the silence of a mother or maternal grandmother and other maternal ascendants has the same effect as disinheritance by a father. Neither the civil law nor the praetor's edict, which promises bonorum possessio contra tabulas to children passed over in silence, requires a mother, or maternal grandparent, to disinherit a son or daughter, or a daughter's children of either sex if they are not instituted. But in such cases there is another remedy which will be explained below.

#### IX. THE PLAINT OF THE UNDUTEOUS WILL

302. The rules considered in the last chapter secured that parents should not pass over their children in silence and that if they chose to disinherit them they should use the appropriate form. Failing this, the children were said to be praeteriti (passed over) and might avail themselves of the remedies above described. These rules did not prevent a father from disinheriting his children. They merely said how he was to do so. Further, the rule applied to the father's (or grandfather's) will only, not to the mother's. But from the end of the Republic, or the beginning of the Empire, a new principle asserted itself, namely that a testator was not free to dispose of his property as he pleased, that certain near relations must be provided for. If he failed in this duty the will might be impeached and rescinded by a procedure known as the plaint of the unduteous will—*querela inofficiosi testamenti*. This was an action brought against an instituted heir who had entered on the inheritance. It originated in the Court of the centumviri (§ 673), and took the form of a fictitious allegation that the testator was insane, and that the will was therefore invalid or must be set aside. Later, this fiction disappeared from view and the *querela* was considered to be based upon the unjust reflection cast upon the person passed over or insufficiently provided for. 2 13 pr 2. 18 pr

<sup>89</sup> Cod. 6. 28. 4.

<sup>90</sup> Cod. 8. 47 (48). 10.



(c) The just grounds of exheredation were defined by Novel 115 (A.D. 542)—fourteen in the case of children, eight in the case of parents, three in the case of brothers and sisters. The burden of justifying disinheritance lay upon the instituted heir.

(d) Lastly, by the same Novel, Justinian introduced an entirely new condition by requiring the persons entitled to the legitim, if descendants or ascendants, to be instituted heirs, but not necessarily to the amount of the legitim. Failing this, the will could be upset, but only as concerns the institution of heirs, legacies and fideicommissa remaining unaffected. This enactment carries the law a stage further as regards recognition of the claims of next-of-kin. In the earliest stage descendants might be disinherited, but not passed over in silence. In the classical and post-classical periods, they might still be disinherited, but some provision must be made for them. In the latest stage descendants and ascendants must be both instituted heirs and provided for up to the statutory amount. If they were disinherited, however amply provided for, they could bring the *querela*. If they were instituted, but insufficiently provided for, they had the *actio ad supplendam legitimam*. If they were passed over in silence, they might have recourse to the civil law remedy of *petitio hereditatis* or the praetorian remedy of *honorum possessio contra tabulas*. Such at least is a probable explanation of the situation. But the procedural consequences of Justinian's latest change in the law are as obscure as they are unimportant.

308. The expectations of descendants and others might be defeated by alienation *inter vivos* no less than by last will. To provide against this contingency an aggrieved person was allowed to bring a *querela inofficiosae donationis* or *inofficiosae dotis*. "The effect was that both under wills and in intestacy there was machinery similar to the *querela* [*inofficiosi testamenti*] by which immoderate *donationes* and *dotes* might be set aside."<sup>95</sup>

309. THE MODERN LAW OF LEGITIM.—The principle of the legitim is an integral part of those modern systems of law, which have a Roman ancestry more or less direct. German writers on Roman Law use the phrase "succession by necessity" (*die Noterbfolge*) to cover both the rules requiring certain persons to be instituted or disinherited and the rules requiring certain persons to be provided for. These are distinguished as formal succession by necessity (*das formelle Noterbrecht*), and material succession by necessity (*das*

<sup>95</sup> Buckl. T. 332.

materielle *Noterbrecht* or *Pflicht-teils-recht*). The French writers speak of "succession against the will" (*succession à l'encontre du testament*). In French Law the part of the estate which a testator may dispose of is called *la quotité disponible*. This is the equivalent of a child's portion if there are three children or less, and in any event is not less than one quarter of the estate. In German Law the testator may in any event freely dispose of one half of his estate.

The English Law has tardily and to a very limited extent recognised the duty of a testator to provide for his family in the *Inheritance (Family Provision) Act, 1938*. In South Africa, where the *legitim* has been abolished by statute, the Courts none the less regard the duty of educating and maintaining minor children as "a debt resting upon the estate".<sup>96</sup>

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II

#### TITLE XVIII

##### *Of the undutious will*

Since it often happened that parents unreasonably disinherited or passed over their children a rule was introduced allowing children who complain that they have been unjustly disinherited or unjustly passed over to bring the plaint of the undutious will on the pretended ground that the parents were in a way insane when they made their will. It is not alleged that the testator was really insane (If he had been there would have been no will at all); the supposition is that testator has made his will validly, but not in accordance with the claims of natural affection. § 302.

1. It is not merely children who may thus impeach the will of their parents, but parents similarly impeach the will of their children. Brothers and sisters are by imperial constitutions preferred to base persons instituted heirs. Consequently they cannot take proceedings against any and every heir. Relatives more distantly related than brothers and sisters cannot take proceedings with any hope of success. § 303.

2. Natural children and adoptive children (with due observance of the distinction in our constitution) may bring the plaint of the undutious will if they have no other means of coming at the deceased person's estate. For no one can bring the plaint who can claim the inheritance in whole or in part by any other form of proceeding. Posthumous children too, if they have no other remedy, may bring the *querela*. § 105.

3. All this must be understood to apply only if the testator has left them nothing at all by his will. This has been enacted by our

<sup>96</sup> Lee, p. 43.

§ 307

constitution out of regard for the claims of nature. If they have been left any share of the inheritance great or small, or any thing whatever, the querela cannot be brought, but the aggrieved party may have what he takes under the will brought up to a fourth part of what he would take in the event of an intestacy, although there is no direction to this effect in the will. 4. If a tutor has accepted a legacy given by the will of his own father to a ward whose affairs he is administering, while the tutor himself received nothing under his father's will, this does not prevent him impeaching his father's will on his own account.

§ 304

5. Conversely, if he has brought the querela in the name of a ward to whom nothing was left and has failed in the suit, he does not forfeit a legacy left to himself in the same will.<sup>97</sup> 6. Accordingly, in order to exclude the querela a person must have his quarter, either as heir, or by way of legacy or fideicommissum or gift mortis causa, or by gift inter vivos, but only in the cases mentioned in our constitution, or in the other ways specified in the constitutions.<sup>98</sup>

7. When we say "quarter" this must be understood in the sense that, whether there be one person, or more than one, entitled to impeach the will, there is one quarter for them all, so that each person gets his rateable share of the quarter.

## X. HOW WILLS FAIL TO TAKE EFFECT

310. It is not enough that a will should be valid *ab initio*. It is further necessary that it remain valid until the heir enters upon the inheritance. A will valid *ab initio* (jure factum) may fail to take effect in any of the following ways:—

311. (1) By the subsequent introduction into the family of a new suus heres, which takes place:—

- (a) by birth, *i.e.* when after the date of the will a child is born to the testator who has not been instituted or duly disinherited<sup>99</sup>;
- (b) (in the older law) when a woman became a wife in manu of the testator and thereby acquired the status of daughter<sup>100</sup>;
- (c) when owing to the death or emancipation of a son during testator's lifetime the son's children take his place as sui heredes (§ 322);

2. 13 2

<sup>97</sup> If a relative impeached the will unsuccessfully, anything given to him by the will was forfeited to the fiscus. Dig. 5. 2. 8, 14. It was a case of ereption for indignity (§ 298).

<sup>98</sup> *viz.*, if made propter nuptias or by way of dos and in some other exceptional cases (Moyle, *ad loc.*).

<sup>99</sup> Ulp. XXIII, 3.

<sup>100</sup> Since coemptio, which produced manus (§ 112) might be used for other purposes than matrimony (coemptio fiducia causa), a woman might be in a man's manus without being his wife and having the status of daughter. In that case she would acquire the status of daughter only if she afterwards married him—si quae in manu fuit nubat. G. 2. 139.

- (d) when the testator acquires a new *suus heres* by 2. 17. 1. adoption.

312. Anciently, any one of the above events was fatal to the will and there was no way of avoiding the consequence. But ultimately jurisprudence and legislation combined to make it possible to save the will by instituting or disinheriting in advance any one who in the course of nature might come to rank as *suus heres* of the testator. Failing this precaution the will was destitute of effect. Adoption, however, which was not an accident of nature, continued to avoid the will, just as marriage (usually) does in English law, except, perhaps, when the adopted son had been previously instituted.<sup>1</sup> There could, of course, be no question of previous disinheritance, since he was not a *suus heres* at the date of the will.<sup>2</sup>

313. (2) By making a subsequent will, even though in the event no one accepted the inheritance. If the second will was 2. 17. 2. a praetorian will the first will was not technically revoked, but the praetor gave *bonorum possessio* according to the second will, not according to the first.

314. In the above two cases the will was said to be "broken" (*ruptum*).

315. (3) If the testator underwent change of status (*capitis deminutio*) subsequently to the will. In this case the will was 2. 17. 4. said to become inoperative (*irritum*). But the praetor came to the aid of the instituted heir, if the will satisfied the praetorian requirements and the deceased was a Roman citizen and *sui juris* at the time of his death, by giving him *bonorum possessio secundum tabulas*.<sup>3</sup> At first the grant 2. 17. 6. was provisional merely—*sine re*—and was unavailing against civil law heirs *ab intestato*.<sup>4</sup> Later, it was *cum re*, i.e., an effective answer to their claim.<sup>5</sup>

316. (4) By civil law the only way to revoke a will was to make a new one. But the praetor gave an *exceptio doli* if a testator had burnt, torn or defaced his will or erased the institution of the heir *animo revocandi*.<sup>6</sup> The effect was that

<sup>1</sup> Dig. 28. 2. 23, 1; 28. 3. 18.

<sup>2</sup> G. 2. 140.

<sup>3</sup> Moyle *ad Inst.* 2. 17. 6. says: "The only kind of *capitis deminutio* whose effect, in making the will *irritum*, could be overridden in this manner by *bonorum possessio secundum tabulas* was *capitis deminutio minima*". So Poste *ad G.* 2. 147. But this is questionable. Windscheid, III, § 563, n. 7. The language of the text "*si modo defunctus et civis Romanus et suae potestatis mortis tempore fuerit*" suggests the opposite.

<sup>4</sup> G. 2. 148; Ulp. XXIII, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Girard, p. 891.

<sup>6</sup> G. 2. 151.

he died intestate or revived an earlier will, if it appeared that such was his intention. In the later law destruction animo revocandi annulled the will *ipso jure*.<sup>7</sup>

317. (5) The later imperial law (Theodosius and Honorius A.D. 418) made a will void after a lapse of ten years from its execution. Justinian qualified this by allowing a will after such lapse of time to be revoked by a declaration made before three witnesses or lodged in the archives.<sup>8</sup>

2. 17. 2 318. A will might fail: (6) through being set aside as inofficious, in which case it was said to be rescinded (*rescissum*)<sup>9</sup>; or, (7) if no heir accepted the inheritance, in which case the will was said to be abandoned (*destitutum*). This might happen because the heir or heirs died before the testator, or, surviving him, died before acceptance or repudiated the inheritance.

2. 17. 3 319. Just as a former will could not in general be formally revoked except by a later one, so a later one always revoked the old one. Two valid testaments could not co-exist. However, under the Empire this was modified. If in the second will the heir was instituted to some specific properties merely, and the testator expressed the wish that the first will should remain in force, though the second will revoked the first, the heir was affected with a *fideicommissum* in favour of the heir instituted in the first will, retaining only the property expressly given him in the second will, or so much as together with this was required to bring his share up to the statutory fourth which by the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum* a fiduciary heir was entitled to retain against *fideicommissaries* (§ 352). This was so provided by a rescript of the Emperors Severus and his son Antoninus (or Caracalla).

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II

#### TITLE XVII

#### *In what ways wills fail to take effect*

§ 311. A will duly executed remains valid until it is broken or becomes inoperative. 1. A will is broken when, though the testator's status remains unchanged, the legal effect of the will is impaired. For if after making his will the testator adrogates a person *sui juris* by imperial decree, or adopts a person *alieni juris* before the praetor,

<sup>7</sup> Girard, pp. 889, 890.

<sup>8</sup> Cod. 6. 23. 27, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Dig. 5. 2. 8, 16.

as provided by our constitution, his will is broken, just as if he had acquired a new *suus heres* by birth. 2. Again, a later will, validly executed, breaks an earlier will. And it makes no difference whether an heir accepts the inheritance under the later will, or does not accept; for the only question asked is whether there could be an heir under the later will. Accordingly, if the instituted heir renounces the inheritance, or dies either in the lifetime of the testator or after his death before entering upon the inheritance, or if he is instituted conditionally and the condition fails, in all these cases the testator dies intestate; for the earlier will is invalid, being broken by the later will, and the later will is equally without effect, since no one takes up the inheritance. 3. If a testator makes a valid will and afterwards a second will also valid, although in the second will he institutes an heir to certain specified properties only, the first will is destroyed, as was decided by a rescript of the Emperors Severus and Antoninus. The words of this constitution we have directed to be inserted here, since there is another matter to which the constitution gives expression. It runs as follows:—"The Emperors Severus and Antoninus to Cocceius Campanus. There should be no doubt that the second testament, although the heir is instituted merely to certain specific properties, is just as valid as if no such things had been mentioned, but the instituted heir is bound to be content with the properties given to him, made up if necessary to the amount of the Falcidian quarter,<sup>10</sup> and to restore the inheritance to the heirs instituted in the earlier will. This results from the clause in the second will expressing the intention that the first will should take effect." This, then, is the way in which a will is broken. 4. There is another way in which wills validly executed are rendered invalid, namely when the testator is *capite deminutus*. How this happens has been explained in Book I.

5. In this case wills are said to become inoperative. No doubt wills which are broken become inoperative and wills which are *ab initio* invalid are inoperative, and valid wills which are rendered inoperative by *capitis deminutio* may also be said to be broken. But since it is more convenient to distinguish different events by appropriate names we say that some wills are invalid, and that some valid wills are broken or become inoperative. 6. (5) However, wills *ab initio* valid which are rendered inoperative by *capitis deminutio* are not wholly destitute of effect. For, if they are sealed with the seals of seven witnesses the instituted heir may claim *bonorum possessio secundum tabulas*, if at the moment of death the testator was a Roman citizen of independent status. But if the will was rendered inoperative by the testator's loss of citizenship or of liberty, or by his giving himself in adoption and at the time of his death he was in the power of his adoptive father, the instituted heir cannot ask for possession of goods in terms of the will. 7. (6) A will cannot be invalidated merely because the testator did not want it to remain in force and

<sup>10</sup> More precisely Pegasian, but the *quarta Pegasiana* is frequently called *quarta Falcidia*, the s.c. being in effect read as one enactment with the *lex*. The words of the constitution are quoted also in Dig. 36. 1. 30(29).

still less if after making one will he has begun to make another, and either because he was prevented by death or because he changed his mind has not carried it through to completion. This is laid down in an Oration of the Emperor Pertinax,<sup>11</sup> providing that valid wills are not to be deprived of effect except by a subsequent will duly executed and completed. If a will is incomplete it is, of course, no will at all.

8. (7) In the same Oration the Emperor declared that he would not accept an inheritance to which the Emperor was instituted merely in order to involve some one in litigation, nor would he approve a will irregularly executed in which he was instituted heir from the same motive, nor would he accept the title of heir on the strength of spoken words, nor take anything by virtue of any writing not authorised by law. The Emperors Severus and Antoninus have issued many rescripts to the same effect, "For though" say they, "we are above the law, yet we live obedient to the law".

#### XI. DIFFERENT KINDS OF TESTAMENTARY HEIR— ACCEPTANCE OF THE INHERITANCE

320. The third and last condition of the effective validity of the Roman will was that an heir or heirs should duly enter upon the inheritance (§ 262). Failing this, the will was *destitutum* (§ 318) and there was an intestacy. There were three classes of testamentary heirs, *viz.* (1) necessary (*necessarii*); (2) family and necessary or family (*sui et necessarii* or *sui*); (3) extraneous (*extranei*).

2. 19. 1      321. *Necessarii heredes*. These were slaves instituted heirs with a gift of liberty. In the later law the gift of liberty was implied from the institution. The slave was called "necessary heir" because he could not refuse the inheritance, but as a set-off the praetor gave him the right of separation (*beneficium separationis*, so called), *i.e.* allowed him to apply for "separation of goods", with the consequence that he kept intact anything that he acquired as his own property after the death of the testator and creditors had to be content with the assets of the estate. The object of instituting a slave in the last resort was to relieve the memory of the deceased from the ignominy of *post mortem* bankruptcy. It may be remarked in passing that the phrase "separation of goods" had another application, *viz.*, when creditors of the estate claimed separation as against creditors of the heir,<sup>11a</sup> a very necessary precaution if the heir was heavily indebted, for the normal consequence of succession was to absorb the patrimony of the deceased in the patrimony of the heir.

322. *Sui et necessarii* or *sui heredes*. These were descen-

<sup>11</sup> A.D. 193.

<sup>11a</sup> Dig. 46. 2. 1, 1.

dants in the power of the testator who became *sui juris* upon his death, and children or further descendants born after his death (posthumous, therefore, in the modern sense of the word), who would have been in this position, if born during his lifetime. A grandchild satisfied these conditions if conceived during testator's lifetime and if his father had ceased to be in power (by death or otherwise) before the testator's death. Gaius and Justinian say that *sui heredes* are so called because they are "family heirs" (*domestici heredes*) and even during testator's lifetime have, in a way, a vested interest in the family estate: "Even in the lifetime of their parent they are deemed to be in a certain sense owners". By the civil law they could not decline the inheritance, but the praetor gave them the privilege of abstaining (the so-called *beneficium abstinendi*); which, however, they lost, if they intermeddled with the estate. But minors and soldiers who had done so might petition for relief by *restitutio in integrum* (§ 758).

323. *Extranei heredes*, *i.e.* persons not subject to testator's power. These might accept or not as they pleased and by civil law might take their own time to do so. It was usual, however, for the testator to prescribe a limit of time (normally, one hundred days) within which the heir must make a formal acceptance, if he meant to accept at all. This institution was known as *cretio* (§ 283). Apart from this, any indication of intention to accept the inheritance (*adire hereditatem*), and in particular, acting as heir (*pro herede gerere*) was sufficient. An acceptance or refusal, once made, could not be retracted, except by minors and soldiers. The practice of directing the heir to make *cretio* had fallen into disuse before Justinian. Instead of this it was usual for the heir, under pressure from the creditors or at his own instance,<sup>12</sup> to apply to the praetor to fix a period for him to deliberate (*spatium deliberandi*), within which he must accept (if he meant to),<sup>13</sup> or (as Justinian enacted)<sup>14</sup> disclaim, if he meant to, the inheritance, *i.e.*, failure to disclaim was construed as acceptance. The time allowed was not less than one hundred days and usually not more than nine months. Meanwhile, the inheritance was vacant (*hereditas jacens*, § 129) and with reference to the heir was said to be *delated* (*delata*), *i.e.*, offered, or open for his acceptance: "A *delated* inheritance means one which one can acquire by entering upon it".<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Girard, p. 932

<sup>13</sup> G. 2. 167.

<sup>14</sup> Cod. 6. 30. 22. 14a.

<sup>15</sup> Dig. 50. 16. 151.



3. 1 pr.

**324. LAPSED PORTIONS—CADUCA.**—If a single heir for any cause did not in due course take the inheritance there was an intestacy. If one of several co-heirs was dead or disqualified when the will was executed his institution was wiped out. It was taken *pro non scripto*. If the institution, though initially valid, subsequently failed from whatever cause (death, disqualification, repudiation, etc.) there was a lapse and the lapsed portion went to the other heirs by right of accretion (*jus adcrendi*). The marriage laws of Augustus made fundamental changes. First, they created a new statutory class of lapses by withholding from *caelibes* and *orbi* the *jus capiendi* (§ 296). Secondly, they decreed that all lapses (*caduea*), statutory or other, should escheat to the *aerarium* (later replaced by the *fiscus*),<sup>16</sup> unless there was a co-heir or legatee blessed with issue to arrest the *caducum* on its way to the public chest,<sup>17</sup> (*caducorum vindicatio*). Thirdly, the same laws, or later *senatusconsulta*, postponed acceptance of the inheritance and, by consequence, the vesting of legacies to the opening of the will and thus prolonged the possibility of lapse.<sup>18</sup> The effect was to exclude the *jus adcrendi* except in the case of descendants and ascendants of the testator to the third degree, who enjoyed the *jus antiquum* (§ 296). Constantine relieved *caelibes* and *orbi* of their disabilities, but the law of lapses remained otherwise unchanged until Justinian abolished it by his constitution *de caducis tollendis* (A.D. 534)<sup>19</sup> and re-established the *jus adcrendi* with the difference that the accrued portion was to carry with it any attached burdens of legacy, etc., which had not been the case in the old law. He also reverted to the old rule that an heir who knew that he was instituted might enter upon the inheritance immediately upon the death of the testator without waiting for the opening of the will.

**325. TRANSMISSION OF THE INHERITANCE.**—But acceptance might for various reasons be delayed. If the heir survived the testator but died before entry he did not transmit the inheritance to his heirs, because it was not yet his to transmit. Such was the principle, but it was modified by legislation. Theodosius II made it inapplicable to descendants of the testator who died before the opening of the will (*transmissio Theodosiana*).<sup>20</sup> Thus, a grandson took the place of his deceased father instituted by the grandfather's will. Justinian

<sup>16</sup> Ulp. XVII, 2.<sup>17</sup> G. 2. 207.<sup>18</sup> Ulp. XVII, 1; XXIV, 31.<sup>19</sup> Cod. 6. 51.<sup>20</sup> Cod. 6. 52. (A.D. 450). Compare Wills Act, 1837, s. 33.

made the right of accepting the inheritance transmissible from and to any heirs, but only within a year of its becoming available (*transmissio Justiniane*)<sup>21</sup> and the heirs of the heir must accept, if at all, within the remainder of the year.

326. *BENEFICIUM INVENTARII*.—Finally, a constitution of A.D. 531 made a revolution in this branch of the law by providing that any heir (testamentary or *ab intestato*) who had doubts about accepting or refusing might accept with benefit of inventory (*beneficium inventarii*). If he did so, he had to begin an inventory of the assets within thirty days of becoming aware of his right to claim the inheritance and complete it within another sixty days. By satisfying this requirement he escaped liability for the debts of the deceased beyond the extent of the assets. In effect he was converted from a universal successor into an executor and residuary legatee. Reluctantly, “that we may not be thought to have a complete disregard of antiquity”, Justinian retained the alternative of applying for the *spatium deliberandi*. An heir who accepted after deliberation incurred all the old liabilities of the universal successor. But he was not relieved from the duty of making an inventory. If he failed to do so, he was denied the benefit of the *lex Falcidia* (§ 343).<sup>22</sup>

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II

#### TITLE XIX

##### *Of the different kinds of heir*

Heirs are either *necessarii* or *sui et necessarii* or *extranei*. 1. A *heres necessarius* is a slave of the testator, whom he institutes heir, and is so called because, whether he wishes it or not, he becomes free and necessary heir immediately on the death of the testator. Hence it comes that testators who have doubts about their solvency are in the habit of instituting a slave, or substituting a slave in the second or any remoter place, so that if creditors are not satisfied, it may be the estate of the heir rather than that of the testator which is possessed by the creditors, or sold or divided between them. In compensation for this disadvantage the necessary heir has the advantage that he keeps for himself everything that he acquires after the death of his patron, and, if the estate proves insufficient to satisfy the creditors, his own property cannot afterwards be sold to make good the deficiency. § 321.

2. *Sui et necessarii heredes*, are, for instance, a son, a daughter,

<sup>21</sup> Cod. 6. 30. 19 (A.D. 529).

<sup>22</sup> Inst. 2. 19. 6; Cod. 6. 30. 22, 14c.

§ 322. a grandson, or granddaughter by a son, and other descendants [through males], provided they were in the power of the deceased. But it is not enough that a grandchild should have been in the grandfather's power at the time of death; it is further necessary that his father should have ceased to be *suus heres* to his father, either carried off by death or in some way released from power; for then the grandchild takes the place of his father as *suus heres* of the grandfather. *Sui heredes* are so called because they are family heirs and are in a way deemed to be owners even in the lifetime of their father. This again is the reason why if a man dies intestate the succession goes in the first instance to the children. They are called "necessary" because in every event, whether they wish it or not, they are heirs *ab intestato* or testamentary. But the praetor allows them, if they wish it, to abstain from the inheritance so that it is the parent's estate and not their own of which the creditors take possession.

3. Others who are not subject to the testator's power are called  
 § 323. *extranei heredes*, and so even our children, if they are not in our power, when we institute them as heirs, are considered to be *extraneous heirs*. If children are instituted heirs by their mother they are in the same position, because women do not have children in their power. Also a slave who is instituted heir by his master and manumitted after the execution of the will is in the same position

4. With *extraneous heirs* there must be *testamenti factio* whether they are instituted themselves, or those in their power are instituted. In regard to this two moments of time are taken into account, the time when the will is made, and the time when the testator dies, the first to give validity to the institution, the second to give it effect. Further, there should also be *testamenti factio* with the heir  
 § 293. when he enters on the inheritance, whether the institution is absolute or conditional. But change in the status of the heir in the interval between the execution of the will and the death of the testator or the realisation of the condition does not hurt the heir, because, as we have said, three times must be taken into account. The term *testamenti factio* is applied not only to a testator who is competent to make a will, but also to a person who is competent to take for himself or to acquire for another under a will, though he may not be competent to make a will himself. Therefore, persons who are insane or dumb, posthumous children, infants, sons in power and another person's slaves are said to have *testamenti factio*; for although they cannot make a will themselves, they can take under a will either for themselves or for some one else. 5. *Extraneous heirs*  
 § 323. are allowed to deliberate whether they will accept or renounce the inheritance. But if a family heir who has the privilege of abstaining has intermeddled with the property, or if an *extraneous heir*, who may deliberate, has entered on the inheritance, he may not afterwards abandon it, unless he is under twenty five years of age; for if persons within this limit of age have taken up a ruinous inheritance the praetor comes to their aid, just as he does in any other matter in which they have been misled. 6. It must be observed, however,

that the Emperor Hadrian once extended indulgence even to a person above twenty five years of age in a case in which a heavy liability unknown when the heir entered on the inheritance afterwards came to light. This was a special favour granted to an individual. At a later date the Emperor Gordian<sup>23</sup> extended the privilege to soldiers in general. But our constitution has put this benefit within the reach of all the subjects of our Empire. By complying with its provisions any one may enter upon an inheritance and be liable only to the extent of the value of the estate, so that there is no longer any need to have recourse to deliberation, unless an heir thinks best, instead of acting in terms of our constitution, to take time to deliberate and to incur the old liability consequent upon the acceptance of an inheritance. § 326.

7. An extraneous heir, whether instituted in a will, or called to the succession *ab intestato*, becomes heir either by acting as heir or even by a mere expression of intention to take up the inheritance. A person is deemed to act as heir, if in the character of heir he deals with things belonging to the estate, as by selling them, by cultivating or giving a lease of landed property, or indeed by declaring in any way whatever by word or deed his purpose of entering on the inheritance, provided that he knows that the owner of the property has died testate or intestate and knows that he himself is his heir. To act as heir is equivalent to acting as owner, for in the old language the word *heres* was often used in the sense of *dominus*. Just as an extraneous heir becomes heir by a mere declaration of intention, so a contrary decision effects an immediate repudiation. There is nothing to prevent a person who is born deaf or dumb or becomes so afterwards from acting as heir and acquiring the inheritance for himself, provided that he understands what he is doing. § 323.

## XII. LEGACIES

327. The topic of legacy is intimately connected with testamentary succession, for though there may be a will without a legacy, there cannot be a legacy without a will. Legacy is vaguely described in the Institutes as "a gift left by a deceased person", and more precisely in the Digest as "a diminution of the inheritance whereby the testator directs that something which would otherwise form part of the whole estate going to the heir is to go to some other person".<sup>24</sup> Thus, while inheritance was a form of universal succession, legacy was a form of particular succession; and while the heir was liable for the debts of the deceased, the legatee was not liable for debts, but could not take, or having taken keep, his legacy until the debts were satisfied. 2. 20 1.

328. A legacy commonly consisted in a gift of a corporeal

<sup>23</sup> A.D. 238.

<sup>24</sup> Dig. 30. 116 pr. (Florentinus).

- thing or things, determined specifically or generally—"my black horse", "five hundred aurei", etc., but it might assume a great variety of forms. Thus a usufruct or a praedial servitude might be created by way of legacy; the testator might discharge his debtor by leaving him a legacy of the debt (legatum liberationis); or bequeath the debt to a third person (legatum nominis); or charge his heir with some duty of action or abstention, for example, to build a bath or theatre for a municipality.<sup>25</sup> A legacy might take the form of a gift of an *aliquot* part of the inheritance<sup>26</sup> ("Be Sempronius my heir. Let my heir divide my inheritance with Titius"). This was called a "partitary legacy". In the instance given he takes one half. Any other proportion might be arranged. But in all such cases the legatee took by particular not by universal title. He was not liable for the debts.
2. 20. 13.  
2. 20. 21.  
2. 23. 5.

329. The distinguishing marks of a legacy in contrast with a fideicommissum of a single thing was that a legacy was left by imperative words and was legally binding upon the heir, while a fideicommissum was created by words of request<sup>27</sup> and imposed at first a merely moral obligation. A legacy might be left by a will and from the beginning of the Empire by a codicil confirmed by will either by anticipation or subsequently.<sup>28</sup> A fideicommissum could be left by an unconfirmed codicil. There were other differences which will be noticed below (§ 357). Most of the differences between legacies and fideicommissa had already ceased to exist before Justinian fused the two institutions as described in the text.
2. 23. 1.  
2. 20. 2.

330. Until Justinian's legislation (§ 335) legacies were (in point of form) of four kinds:—viz. (1) per vindicationem (by vindication); (2) per damnationem (by condemnation); (3) *sinendi modo* (by way of sufferance); (4) per praeceptionem (by taking in advance). Each of these was created by an appropriate form of words and had its own special consequences.
2. 20. 2.

331. LEGATUM PER VINDICATIONEM.<sup>29</sup>—This entitled the legatee to vindicate the subject of the legacy, that is to claim it from the heir or any one else in a real action. A testator could leave by this method only a thing which belonged to him by quiritary title, both at the date of the will and at the

<sup>25</sup> Dig. 35. 2. 80, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ulp. XXIV, 25.

<sup>27</sup> Ulp. XXIV, 1.

<sup>28</sup> G. 2. 270a; Girard, p. 968

<sup>29</sup> G. 2. 193.

time of death, unless the legacy consisted in "things which are weighed, counted, or measured" (fungible things), in which case it was sufficient that they belonged to the testator at the time of death.<sup>30</sup> The effect of the legacy was that the thing bequeathed became the property of the legatee by quiritary title from the moment of the acceptance of the inheritance. The only doubt was if this was so, whether he knew of it or not. The Sabinian view was that it vested forthwith subject to repudiation. The Proculians held that the legacy did not vest until the legatee knew of it and wished it to belong to him. The Sabinian (not, as Gaius says, the Proculian) view prevailed.<sup>31</sup> The correct formula was: "I give and bequeath the slave Stichus". But either "give" or "bequeath" was enough, and there were other alternatives. This type of legacy was also available to constitute a usufruct or praedial servitude over property which belonged to the testator by quiritary title, for in this case also the right vested directly in the legatee and he could enforce it by the appropriate real action (*actio confessoria*).<sup>32</sup>

332. *LEGATUM PER DAMNATIONEM*.<sup>33</sup>—The testator might give by this method anything whatever, whether it belonged to himself, to his heir, or to a third person. If it belonged to a third person the heir must acquire it, if he could; otherwise, pay its value. A thing not yet in existence might be bequeathed by this method, as an unborn slave or next year's harvest. The legatee's remedy was a personal action against the heir. The formula was: "Be my heir condemned to give (*dare damnas esto*)", or, simply, "my heir must give (*dato*) the slave Stichus". If the subject of the legacy was a thing precisely ascertained, the double value was recoverable in case of denial of liability. This was a survival from the *legis actio* procedure and was one of several cases in which denial had this consequence.

G. 4. 9.

333. *LEGATUM SINENDI MODO*.<sup>34</sup>—The formula was: "Be my heir condemned to allow Lucius Titius to take and have for himself the slave Stichus". On the face of it, the duty imposed upon the heir is negative, a duty of sufferance. But the view prevailed that the heir was required to transfer the thing to the legatee by any appropriate method. In the result, therefore, there was little to distinguish this form of legacy from the last, except principally, that by this the

<sup>30</sup> G. 2. 196.

<sup>31</sup> G. 2. 195; Dig. 8. 6. 19, 1; Girard, p. 981, n. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 8. 6. 17; Girard, p. 969.

<sup>33</sup> G. 2. 201.

<sup>34</sup> G. 2. 209.

testator could only dispose of what belonged to himself or to his heir at the time of death and not of what belonged to a third person. Since the property did not vest immediately in the legatee, the appropriate remedy was a personal action against the heir.

334. *LEGATUM PER PRAECEPTIONEM*.<sup>35</sup>—This was a direction that the legatee might take something out of the estate before it was distributed amongst the heirs. The formula was: "Let Lucius take the slave Stichus in advance". Since an heir could not be charged with a legacy to himself,<sup>36</sup> this meant that if, for example, Sempronius and Titius were instituted heirs each to one half, and Sempronius was given a legacy per praepceptionem of the slave Stichus, he took one half share in the slave in his quality of heir, and the other half share in the slave by virtue of a legacy charged upon the share of his co-heir Titius, but the inheritance to be divided between Sempronius and Titius was the inheritance *minus* the slave Stichus, which Sempronius had "taken in advance". The question was debated between the schools whether a legacy could be left in these terms to a person who was not a co-heir.<sup>37</sup> The Sabinian view was that it could not. It followed that the only action appropriate to such a legacy was the action given to co-heirs for a division of the inheritance, in which it would be the duty of the judge to see that the subject of the legacy was adjudicated (§ 703) to the person entitled. The Proculians, on the contrary, held that a legacy expressed in these terms could be left to a stranger, the direction that the legatee should "take in advance" being construed simply as a direction that "he should take". In Latin this meant that the first syllable of the word was to be ignored and the word praecipito read as if it were capito. Gaius adds that this opinion "is said to have been confirmed by a constitution of the late Emperor Hadrian".<sup>38</sup> This is one of the passages which lend colour to the view that Gaius was a provincial and that the latest sources of information were not accessible to him. According to this view the legatee's remedy would vary with the circumstances. If the slave was the *quiritary* property of the testator the legatee could vindicate it, whether he was a co-heir or a stranger (the formula "*heres meus capito*" was a permitted variant in the legacy per vindicationem)<sup>39</sup>; if the slave was

<sup>35</sup> G. 2. 216.

<sup>36</sup> Ulp. XXIV, 22.

<sup>37</sup> G. 2. 217, 218.

<sup>38</sup> G. 2. 221.

<sup>39</sup> G. 2. 193.

in bonis (merely) of the testator, a co-heir could take advantage of the action for the division of the inheritance.

335. *SENATUSCONSULTUM NERONIANUM*.—Such was the old law as stated by Gaius. But these distinctions had already been rendered less important by a *senatusconsultum* of the Emperor Nero, which enacted that if a legacy was expressed in inappropriate terms (for example, if a testator gave a thing which did not belong to him by quiritary title by a form of words appropriate to a legacy by vindication) it should take effect in the way most favourable to the legacy, that is by condemnation.<sup>40</sup> If, however, a legacy was expressed in appropriate terms it retained its former effect.<sup>41</sup> This enactment was in turn superseded by a law of A.D. 339 providing that in legacies or *fideicommissa* no form of words need be observed,<sup>42</sup> so that it was indifferent how a testator expressed his intention. Finally, Justinian by constitutions of 529 and 531 enacted that legacies and *fideicommissa* indifferently should give rise, according to circumstances, to a real, personal or hypothecary action.<sup>43</sup> This last was a consequence of the tacit or legal hypothec which Justinian gave the legatee or *fideicommissary* over all the items of the estate in security of his claim. Words of command and words of request were to have the same effect. There was to be no difference between legacies and *fideicommissa*. All the advantages of each were to attach to the other. In case of conflict the humaner character of *fideicommissum* was to prevail.

336. In general the same *testamenti factio* was required in a legatee as in an heir. But there were differences. The *lex Voconia* (§ 293), which incapacitated women from being instituted by testators who were in the first class of the census did not apply to legacies.<sup>44</sup> Conversely, before Justinian, a *postumus alienus* could not take a legacy, though if instituted heir he could get *bonorum possessio* from the praetor.<sup>45</sup> 2. 20 24.

337. Justinian devotes a short title to *ademption* and *transference* of legacies. *Ademption* (taking away) is the technical term for revocation. This might be effected by any apt words in the will itself or in a subsequent codicil, or by

<sup>40</sup> G. 2. 197; Ulp. XXIV, 11a.

<sup>41</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 207.

<sup>42</sup> Cod. 6. 37. 21. Buckland says this "seems to mean that where ambiguous forms were used, the court would have to determine which form was meant. But it may signify that in practice the distinctions of form were beginning to be disregarded".

<sup>43</sup> Inst. 2. 20. 2; Cod. 6. 43. 1 & 2.

<sup>44</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 341; *M.* p. 207.

<sup>45</sup> G. 2. 241; Inst. 2. 20. 27; 3. 9 pr.



further claim, because he has got it by a lucrative title; if the value, he can.

7. A thing which is not in existence may be the subject of a legacy, if some day it will exist, for example the future fruits of land, or the unborn child of a female slave.

8. If the same thing is left to two persons, whether conjunctively or disjunctively and both accept the legacy, it is divided between them; if one legatee falls out, because he renounces the legacy, or has died in the lifetime of the testator, or in any other way failed to take, the whole goes to the other legatee. A legacy is conjunctive, if for example, a testator says, "I give and bequeath the slave Stichus to Titius and Seius"; disjunctive, if he says, "I give and bequeath the slave Stichus to Titius"—"I give and bequeath the slave Stichus to Seius". If he says "the same slave Stichus" the legacy is equally disjunctive.

9. If a legacy is given of land which is not the property of the testator, and the legatee has bought the property less the usufruct, and afterwards the usufruct comes to him [by lucrative title] and he brings an action on the testament, Julian says that his claim to the land is well-founded, because the existence of the usufruct, which is regarded as a servitude, is no obstacle to plaintiff's claim, but it is incumbent on the judge to order the heir to pay the value of the land, less the value of the usufruct.

10. If the subject of a legacy is a thing which belongs to the legatee, the legacy fails to take effect, because a man cannot be made owner of a thing which is his already; and even if he has parted with it, he cannot claim either the thing or its value. 11. If a person has left a legacy of a thing belonging to him believing it to belong to some one else the legacy is good, because the actual fact carries more weight than the mistaken belief. Even if he thought that the thing belonged to the legatee, the legacy holds good because effect can be given to the testator's intention. 12. If a testator has bequeathed a thing which belonged to him and has afterwards alienated it, Celsus holds that if he sold it with no intention of revoking the legacy, the thing is still due. Severus and Antoninus gave a rescript to this effect. They also decreed that if a man after making his will has pledged land which he had given as a legacy, he is not to be taken to have revoked the legacy, and therefore the legatee can sue the heir to have the property redeemed. If the testator has alienated part of the thing bequeathed, the part which has not been alienated is of course owing, the other part only if it was alienated with no intention of revoking the legacy. 13. If a person has bequeathed to his debtor release from the debt the legacy is valid; and the heir of the deceased cannot claim payment from the debtor or from his heir, or from any one who is in the position of heir to him. Nay more, the debtor can sue the heir to be discharged from the debt. The testator may also direct the heir not to call in the debt for a certain time.

14. On the other hand, if a debtor has left to his creditor a legacy of what he owes to him, the legacy is void, if there is nothing more in the legacy than there is in the debt, because he gets no advantage

from the legacy. But if the debt is subject to a term or a condition and the legacy is not so limited, the legacy is valid, because the legatee gets his money sooner. Papinian held that if the time limit expires or the condition is satisfied during the testator's lifetime the legacy none the less holds good, because it was valid at first, and this is correct, for we cannot accept the view that a legacy is extinguished because circumstances have arisen which if they had existed at the date of the will would have made it invalid. 15. If a husband gives his wife a legacy of her dos the legacy is valid, because there is more in a legacy than is to be got by suing for the dos.<sup>51</sup> If he bequeaths a dos which in fact he has never received the Emperors Severus and Antoninus pronounced the legacy void, that is, when the legacy is simply a legacy of the dos; but if the testator has given by way of pre-legacy a certain sum of money, or a certain thing or a sum or thing mentioned in a dotal instrument, the legacy holds good.<sup>52</sup> 16. If the subject of the legacy has perished without any responsibility of the heir, the legatee loses it. If the testator has bequeathed a slave belonging to some one else and the slave has been manumitted without the heir having done anything to bring the manumission about, he is not liable to the legatee. But if the heir's own slave was the subject of the legacy and he manumits him, he is liable, Julian says, and it makes no difference whether he knew or did not know that the slave had been left away from him. It is the same if he has given the slave to some one, and the donee has manumitted him. 17. If slave-women have been left together with their children, although the women have died, the children are attributed to the legacy. Similarly, if there is a legacy of skilled slaves together with their assistants, if the skilled slaves are dead, the assistants none the less pass to the legatee. But if a slave is bequeathed together with his peculium, in the event of the slave dying or being manumitted or alienated the legacy of the peculium is also lost. The same is the case if there is a legacy of land "fully furnished" (*fundus instructus*)<sup>53</sup> or "with the instruments of husbandry" (*cum instrumento*); if the land is alienated the legacy is extinguished.

18. If there is a legacy of a flock, and the flock is reduced to a single sheep, this single sheep can be claimed in a real action. Julian says that any additions which accrue to the flock after the making of the will go to the legatee; for a flock is a single entity made up of distinct individuals, just as a building is a single thing made up of stones in combination. 19. It follows that a legacy of a house includes pillars and marbles added to the house

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<sup>51</sup> The action on the legacy had certain advantages over the action on the dos, principally that plaintiff got his money, or whatever it might be, sooner.

<sup>52</sup> If a sum of money or a thing was specified the rule *falsa demonstratio non nocet* (sec. 30, *infra*) applied even though nothing had in fact been received (Cod. 6. 44. 3). The legacy is called a "pre-legacy" because it anticipated the payment of the dos in the ordinary course.

<sup>53</sup> This is the more comprehensive term. It includes furniture (in the ordinary sense) and other useful accessories.

after the date of the will. 20. If there is a legacy of a peculium anything added to or taken from it in the lifetime of the testator is the legatee's gain or loss. But, if the slave has acquired anything after the death of the testator before the heir has entered, Julian says that if the peculium was left to the manumitted slave himself, everything acquired by the slave before the heir enters goes to the legatee, because the legacy takes effect and is calculated from the entry of the heir; but, if the peculium was left to a stranger, acquisitions are not included in the legacy unless the peculium was augmented from its own resources. The manumitted slave has no claim to the peculium unless it was left to him, though if an owner manumitted a slave in his lifetime it is enough if the peculium is not expressly withheld. This was so decided by a rescript of Severus and Antoninus. The same Emperors by another rescript pronounced that if a peculium is left by legacy, it does not carry the consequence that the manumitted slave can claim a refund of money expended for his master's account. Again, they decided that if the direction is that a slave is to be free when he has rendered his accounts, and that he is to make up an adverse balance, this implies a legacy of the peculium. 21. Things incorporeal no less than things corporeal may be the subject of a legacy. Therefore, a man may leave by will a debt due to him with the result that the heir must place his right of action at the disposal of the legatee, unless the testator has recovered the debt in his lifetime, for in that case the legacy is extinguished. Again, a legacy of this kind is valid: "Be my heir condemned to repair such a man's house" or, "to discharge such a man's debt".

§ 328.

22. If a slave or anything else is left in general terms, the legatee has the choice, unless the testator has expressed a different intention. 23. The legacy of an option, that is when the testator has said that a legatee may choose from his slaves or other property which or what he pleases, used to imply a condition and so unless the legatee had exercised the option in his lifetime, he did not transmit any right to his heir. But our constitution<sup>54</sup> has improved upon this and allowed the legatee's heir to exercise the option although the legatee has not done so in his lifetime. If there are several legatees to whom the option is left, or several heirs of one legatee, and they cannot agree in their choice, to prevent the failure of the legacy (the unkind conclusion generally drawn by the jurists) we have decreed that fortune is to be the arbiter, and that the matter is to be decided by lot.<sup>55</sup>

24. Legacies can be left only to persons with whom there is testamenti factio. 25. Formerly, legacies and fideicommissa might not be left to uncertain persons, even by a soldier, as the Emperor Hadrian decided by rescript. By "an uncertain person" was meant a person of whom a testator had no clear mental picture, for example, "Whoever shall give his daughter in marriage to

§ 293.

<sup>54</sup> Cod. 6. 43. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Simonds J. in *Re Knapton*, [1941] 2 A. E. R. 573, citing this text, allowed the same expedient.

my son", or "the first persons to be appointed consuls after the date of my will". It was held too that freedom could not be given to an uncertain person, because it was considered that slaves should be set free by name. Similarly a guardian appointed by will had to be precisely indicated. But a legacy with a certain demonstration, that is to an unascertained member of an ascertained class, was good; for example, "let my heir give such a thing to any one of my relations now in being who takes my daughter in marriage". But imperial constitutions directed that, if legacies or fideicommissa had been left to uncertain persons and paid in error, they could not be recovered. 26. A legacy to a person not in existence at the date of the will, who if he had been then living would not have been a *suus heres* of the testator (*postumus alienus*) was formerly invalid, from which it followed that a grandfather could not leave a legacy to the unborn child of an emancipated son. 27. But the law relating to these matters has been amended by our constitution as regards not only institutions of heirs, but also legacies and fideicommissa.<sup>56</sup> However, it is still the law that an uncertain person cannot be appointed tutor, because a testator must have a clear idea of the person he appoints to be tutor to his children.

28. Indeed, a person born posthumously not in testator's power § 293. might be instituted heir even before our constitution, as he still may be, unless he be a child conceived of a woman who cannot be testator's wife. 29. A legacy is good, though the testator may have made a mistake as to the legatee's name. The same applies in the case of heirs; and rightly, for names were invented in order to identify individuals, and it is just the same if this can be done in any other way. 30. Closely akin to this is the rule, "A false demonstration does not avoid a legacy", for example, "I give as a legacy my slave Stichus born on the estate"; the legacy is good, though Stichus was not born on the estate, but bought, provided that his identity is ascertained. Similarly, if a testator writes, "the slave Stichus, whom I bought from Seius", the legacy is good, though the slave was bought from some one else, always provided that there is no doubt which slave is meant. 31. Much less is a legacy prejudiced by a false cause; for example, "I bequeath my slave Stichus to Titius, because he managed my affairs when I was away", or to Titius, "because I was acquitted on a capital charge through his undertaking my defence", for though Titius did not in fact do either of these things the legacy none the less holds good. But if the cause is expressed in the form of a condition, it is otherwise; for example, "I give such an estate to Titius, if he managed my affairs". 32. Is a legacy to the slave of the heir instituted by the will valid? It is settled that such a legacy if unconditional is ineffectual, and it is not helped by the fact that the slave has ceased to be in the power of the heir in the testator's

<sup>56</sup> This constitution is not included in our text of the Code. Its effect is given in Krueger's edition of the Code (Cod. 48. 6) from an abstract in the *Basilica*.

lifetime, for a legacy which would be invalid if the testator had died immediately after making his will, ought not to be valid merely because he has lived longer.<sup>57</sup> But such a legacy may be left conditionally, so that we have to ask whether when the right to the legacy vests (*dies cedit*) the slave has ceased to be in the power of the heir.<sup>58</sup> § 338. 33. On the other hand, if a slave is instituted heir, there is no doubt that a legacy may be properly given to the slave's master, even unconditionally. For even if the testator has died immediately after making his will, still the right to the legacy is not understood to vest in the heir, for the inheritance has been separated from the legacy, and another person may become heir through the slave, if, before entering on the inheritance by his master's order, he has passed into another person's power, or by being manumitted has become heir himself, in which cases the legacy is good; but if there has been no change in his condition and he enters upon the inheritance by order of his master [who thus becomes heir] the legacy is extinguished.

§ 277. 34. Formerly, a legacy which preceded the institution of the heir was bad, because wills derive their force and effect from the institution of an heir, which is therefore considered to be the starting-point and foundation of the whole will. For the same reason a gift of freedom before the institution of the heir was invalid. But since it seemed unreasonable to pay attention to the order of the words—a thing which the ancient lawyers themselves condemned—and to disregard the testator's intention, we have amended the law in this regard, so that now a legacy (and much more a gift of liberty, which is always favoured) may be placed before the institution of an heir, or between the institutions of different heirs.<sup>59</sup>

35. A legacy expressed to take effect after the death of the heir or of the legatee himself was formerly invalid; for instance, "I give such a legacy when my heir shall be dead", or, "on the day before the death of the heir or legatee". But this too we have corrected, putting legacies on the same footing as *fideicommissa*,<sup>60</sup> in order that the former may not be at any disadvantage in comparison with the latter.

36. Formerly, a testator could not give, revoke or transfer a legacy by way of penalty. A disposition is said to be by way of penalty when it is designed to bring pressure to bear upon a person as an inducement to act or forbear; for example, "Let my heir, if he gives his daughter" (or, as the case may be, "does not give his daughter") "in marriage to Titius, pay Seius ten aurei"; or, "If my heir alienates (or "does not alienate") his slave Stichus, let him give Titius ten aurei"; and the rule was so strictly

<sup>57</sup> This is the *regula Catoniana* (Dig. 34. 7. 1; Buckl. *M.* p. 207) domiciled and expanded in English law in the form *quod ab initio non valet in tractu temporis non convalescit*. Broom's *Legal Maxims* (9), p. 123.

<sup>58</sup> The question had been much discussed: G. 2. 244; Buckl. *T.* p. 341.

<sup>59</sup> Cod. 6. 23. 24.

<sup>60</sup> Cod. 4. 11.

observed that very many imperial constitutions indicated that even the Emperor would not accept any such legacy; nor were such legacies valid in soldiers' wills, though generally any expression of a soldier's will was effectual. Even a gift of liberty thus made was void. Further, Sabinus held that an additional institution could not be made by way of penalty; as if a testator said, "Be Titius my heir: if Titius gives his daughter in marriage to Seius, be Seius also my heir"; for it made no difference how pressure is exercised on the heir, whether by imposing a legacy or by adding a co-heir. But these refinements we have not approved, and we have enacted in general terms that legacies left or revoked or transferred by way of penalty are not to differ in any way from other legacies, with the exception of such as are impossible or prohibited by law or immoral<sup>61</sup>; for the principles of our age do not tolerate any such testamentary dispositions.

## TITLE XXI

### *Of the ademption and transference of legacies*

The ademption of legacies is effective, whether it is made in the same will as that in which the legacy was given or by codicil, and whether by contrary words, as, when the testator has said, "I give and bequeath", he revokes the legacy by saying, "I do not give and bequeath", or by words which are not contrary, in short by any words whatever. § 337.

1. A legacy may be transferred from one person to another, as for example if a person says, "The slave Stichus, whom I bequeathed to Titius, I give and bequeath to Seius", whether he says this in the same will or in a codicil. By this form of words he both takes the legacy from Titius and gives it to Seius.

## XIII. THE LEX FALCIDA

340. By the Law of the Twelve Tables a testator might leave legacies to any amount. This was deduced from the words of the statute: "As a man has disposed of his property, so let the law be." The consequence was that there were many intestacies, because heirs did not think it worth while to accept an inheritance, which might prove of little or no value. Three laws were passed to remedy this state of things. The first two failed. The third succeeded. 2. 22 pr.

341. *Lex Furia testamentaria*.<sup>62</sup> This statute, passed at some date between B.C. 204 and 169, provided that no one, who was not related to the testator within the limit which the praetor later set for the intestate succession of cognates (*viz.*, the sixth degree and the seventh in the case of the

<sup>61</sup> Cod. 6. 41.

<sup>62</sup> G. 2. 225; 4. 23; Ulp. I. 2.

issue of second cousins)<sup>63</sup> might take by way of legacy or gift mortis causa more than a thousand *asses* under a penalty of four times the excess, recoverable by *manus injectio* (§ 669). This failed because a testator might distribute the whole of his estate in legacies within the permitted limit.

342. *Lex Voconia*,<sup>64</sup> B.C. 168. This applied only to the wills of persons who were in the first class of the census. It enacted that no one might take under any such person's will more than the heir, or heirs collectively. Under this statute the heir must have something, but it might be very little, because the testator might leave numerous legacies of small amount.<sup>65</sup>

2. 22 pr 343. *LEX FALCIDIA*, B.C. 40. This was more successful. It provided that a testator might not dispose of more than three quarters of his estate in legacies. This secured to the heir at least one fourth.

344. The statute was interpreted as follows:—

2. 22. 1. (a) If there were two or more heirs, each must have a clear fourth part of the share of the estate to which he was instituted (*quarta Falcidia*). It was not enough that the heirs collectively took one fourth of the estate between them.

2. 22. 2. (b) The value of the estate was computed as it was at the time of death. Subsequent increase or decrease did not affect the valuation. But, since an extraneous heir need not accept the inheritance unless he chose, he could always come to terms with the legatees and so guard against the risk of the estate depreciating in value.

2. 22. 3. (c) In arriving at the valuation, deduction was first made of debts, funeral expenses, and the value of slaves manumitted by the will. The residue was distributed so as to secure at least one fourth of the inheritance to a single heir, or one fourth of each heir's share of the inheritance when there were several heirs, the residue going to the legatees in proportion to the amount of their respective legacies.

(d) If the subject of the legacy was indivisible, *e.g.*, a right of way, it vested in the legatee, but if he took steps to assert his right against the heir, and failed to make compensation to the extent of the heir's statutory claim, he could be met by a plea of fraud (*exceptio doli*).<sup>66</sup>

345. The *lex Falcidia* did not apply to military wills.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> *Vat.* 301.

<sup>64</sup> *G.* 2. 226.

<sup>65</sup> For another provision of the *lex Voconia* *vide supra*, § 291.

<sup>66</sup> *Dig.* 35. 2. 80, 1.

<sup>67</sup> *Dig.* 29. 1. 17, 4.

Before Justinian it applied to other wills without exception. But Justinian withheld its benefit from heirs who claimed a *spatium deliberandi* and did not make an inventory, and in every case allowed a testator to exclude it by express provision in his will.<sup>66</sup> If an heir took advantage of it, when it was open to him to do so, he was required to make his inventory with special formalities.<sup>69</sup> § 326.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II

#### TITLE XXII

##### *Of the lex Falcidia*

It remains to examine the *lex Falcidia*, which is the latest statute limiting the amount of legacies. Anciently the law of the Twelve Tables, providing that "As a man has disposed of his property so let the law be", allowed complete freedom of testamentary disposition, so that a man could, if he pleased, distribute his whole estate in legacies. But it was found desirable to restrict this power of giving legacies; indeed testators themselves had an interest in the matter, for intestacies were very frequent, owing to the refusal of instituted heirs to accept an inheritance which promised them little or no advantage. The matter was dealt with by the *lex Furia* and the *lex Voconia*, but neither of them procured the desired result. Accordingly, last of all the *lex Falcidia* was enacted, which provided that a testator might not dispose in legacies of more than three quarters of his estate, that is to say that a fourth part of the estate was to remain with the instituted heir or heirs. 1. Thereupon the following question arose. If two heirs are instituted, say Titius and Seius, and the share of Titius is wholly exhausted by legacies expressly charged upon him, or burdened beyond the permitted proportion, while the share of Seius is not burdened at all, or burdened, let us say, only to the extent of one half. Is it to be said, because Seius gets one fourth part, or more, of the whole inheritance, that Titius is not allowed to retain anything against the legacies charged upon him? The answer is that he may keep intact a fourth part of his own share in the inheritance, for the principle of the *lex Falcidia* must be applied to each heir separately. 2. The value of the estate for the purpose of the statute is that value which it has at the time of the testator's death. So, for example, if a person whose estate is worth one hundred aurei, has left legacies to that amount, the legatees will not be any better off, if, before the heir enters on the inheritance, the estate has received accessions through slaves belonging to the estate or from birth of

<sup>66</sup> Cod. 6. 30. 14c.

<sup>69</sup> Nov. 1. 2. 2.



issue to female slaves or from natural increase to flocks and herds sufficient to leave one fourth of the inheritance with the heir after the legacies have been paid, but, none the less, the legacies must be reduced by one fourth. Conversely, if the testator has left legacies amounting to seventy five aurei, and before the heir has entered, the property has been so much reduced by fire or shipwreck or death of slaves that it amounts to no more than seventy five aurei, or even less, the legacies must be paid in full. But this does not really hurt the heir, who need not accept the inheritance unless he pleases. Consequently, the legatees must come to terms with him, so as not to lose their legacies through the inheritance being abandoned. 3. In calculating the Falcidian share deduction is first made of debts, funeral expenses, and the value of slaves manumitted by the will; then one fourth of the residue stays with the heirs and three fourths are distributed amongst the legatees in proportion to their several legacies. For example, if we suppose that four hundred aurei have been left in legacies, and the estate amounts to four hundred aurei, each legatee loses a fourth part of his legacy. If three hundred and fifty have been given in legacies, a sum equal to an eighth part of the whole estate, viz., fifty, must be deducted. If five hundred have been left, we deduct first one fifth [of the whole], then one fourth. For we must deduct first the amount by which the legacies exceed the value of the estate and then the fourth part which is to stay with the heirs.

#### XIV. FIDEICOMMISSA

346. The fideicommissum was a contrivance to surmount some of the technicalities of the Roman will. It was a request to the heir to make over the property or part of it to some other person not qualified to take as heir or legatee at civil law. Thus a peregrinus (who might actually be the child of the testator, if he had married a peregrina) could not be heir or legatee, but for a considerable period of time he was allowed to take by way of fideicommissum; and this, according to Gaius, was the principal reason for the introduction of fideicommissa.<sup>70</sup> In course of time fideicommissum came to serve many other ends, for example, to give freedom to slaves (§ 67), and on the other hand was deprived of many of its initial advantages. In essence it was a trust or confidence reposed upon a person's good faith. The person to whom the property was given in the first instance was termed the fiduciarius, the person to whom it was to be handed over was termed the fideicommissarius.

2. 23. 1      347. Originally the fideicommissum created merely a moral obligation. Augustus made it enforceable by legal process. This he did by ordering the consuls to interpose their authority,

<sup>70</sup> G. 2. 285.

and this developed into a regular jurisdiction, which was shared by the consuls with a praetor specially appointed for the purpose known as praetor fideicommissarius. But this did not affect the position of the heir as universal successor. "Once an heir always an heir." It was he and he alone who could sue and be sued in the name of the estate.

348. The heir might be requested to hand over the whole (or part) of the inheritance, or some specific thing. Thus the fideicommissum was employed as a substitute either for the civil law inheritance or for the civil law legacy. Justinian treats of these topics in separate Titles, and it will be convenient to follow this arrangement, though so far as the fideicommissum itself is concerned the same principles apply to one as to the other. But a direction to hand over the inheritance or part of it raised a problem as to the relation of the fideicommissarius to creditors of the estate, which did not normally arise when his position was analogous to that of legatee. It will be necessary to consider this question in some detail.

349. FIDEICOMMISSARY INHERITANCE.—The form of words employed might be the following:—"Be Lucius Titius my heir. I request you, Lucius Titius, as soon as you can enter upon my inheritance to make it over to Gaius Seius." But 2. 23 2. any other words which conveyed the testator's meaning would do as well. If the heir accepted the inheritance, he had to give effect to the trust imposed upon him, by conveying the items of the estate to Gaius Seius by appropriate methods. But he remained liable to creditors of the estate, just as debtors of the estate remained liable to him alone, though he had to hand over whatever he recovered from them. This was a situation which few heirs would be willing to accept. Some method must be found to ensure that the person who took the benefit of the estate should also sustain its burdens. The steps taken to secure this result are an interesting and complicated chapter in legal history.

350. An heir might be desired to hand over the whole inheritance or part of it. If the whole, it was the practice for the heir to sell the inheritance for a nominal price to the fideicommissarius; and the parties entered into the stipulations which were usual when an inheritance was sold, the heir stipulating for an indemnity against claims, and promising on his part to make over to the fideicommissarius any property which might come to him as heir and to make cession to him of

rights of action.<sup>71</sup> These stipulations were called *stipulationes emptae et venditae hereditatis* (stipulations on the sale of an inheritance). If part of the inheritance was to be made over, there was no pretence of a sale, but stipulations directed to the same ends were entered into to secure a proportionate division of benefit and burdens. They were modelled upon the stipulations in use when an heir was directed to hand over a portion of the estate by way of legacy to the "partary legatee" (§ 328). They were known as *stipulationes partis et pro parte* (of a part and in proportion to a part). It will be seen, therefore, that Gaius is right when he says that formerly, i.e. before the legislation to be presently mentioned, the *fideicommissarius* to whom the whole inheritance was made over was in the position neither of heir nor of legatee, but of purchaser. If he took a portion of the estate he was in the position of a partary legatee. This system had many inconveniences. In particular it exposed each party to the risk of the other's insolvency; if the heir became insolvent the *fideicommissarius* got nothing; if the *fideicommissarius* became insolvent the heir lost the benefit of his indemnity.

2. 23. 4.

351. A reform was effected by the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum* of A.D. 56. This rendered the stipulations unnecessary and placed the *fideicommissary* in a position analogous to that of an heir, as soon as the inheritance or part of it was restored to him; and "restoration" simply meant consent on the part of the heir to give effect to the *fideicommissum*. The result was to give the *fideicommissary* an interest to which the praetor (not specifically the praetor *fideicommissarius*) would give effect in relation to third parties. From this time actions lay for and against the heir and the *fideicommissarius* in proportion to their interest in the inheritance; for and against the heir at civil law; for and against the *fideicommissarius* by praetorian law. If the heir sued or was sued after handing over the inheritance, "the plea that the inheritance had been restored" (*exceptio restitutae hereditatis*) was available as a defence.<sup>72</sup>

2. 23. 5.

352. *Fideicommissa* were still liable to fail by refusal of the heir to enter upon the inheritance. This inconvenience was removed by the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum*, passed in the reign of Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), which offered the heir an

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<sup>71</sup> G. 2. 252.

<sup>72</sup> "In civil law he remained capable of suing and liable to suit for the whole, but the praetor controlled and protected him, so that in fact he sued and was sued only so far as he retained any share of the estate, while the heir in trust sued and was sued by analogous actions for what he received." I Roby, p. 372.

inducement to enter in imitation of the fourth share which the *lex Falcidia* allowed him to retain against legatees (§ 343). But the analogy was unfortunate, for it was considered that just as the heir was solely liable, whatever the amount of the legacies, so, in a case to which the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum* applied, he was solely liable, whatever the amount of the *fideicommissum*. The result was that when the heir was not required to hand over more than three quarters of the inheritance, he enjoyed the benefit of the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum* and was liable only to the extent of the one fourth or larger fraction which he retained. But, if he was required to hand over more than three quarters, the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum* applied, and he was solely liable, as he was under the *lex Falcidia*; and this result followed (says Gaius, but on this point Paulus differs from him), whether he chose to retain his Pegasian fourth, or did not.<sup>73</sup> The consequence was that in such cases it became necessary to have recourse once more to the old stipulations. By another clause of the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum*, an heir who declined to enter might be compelled to do so *pro forma*, and to make over the inheritance. But in this case he was merely a conduit-pipe to transmit the inheritance with all its incidents to the *fideicommissary*, just as if the case had fallen within the scope of the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum*. 2. 23. 6.

353. Justinian combined the two *senatusconsulta* in one enactment, which continued to bear the name of *senatusconsultum Trebellianum*. Henceforward:—(1) whether the heir was required to hand over much or little, the benefit and burden were in every case to be rateably divided between the heir and *fideicommissary*; (2) the heir was in every case entitled to retain a clear quarter against *fideicommissaries*; (3) he could be compelled to make formal entry. These two last provisions were retained from the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum*. 2. 23. 7.

The commentators speak of the quarter which the heir was allowed to retain against *fideicommissaries* as the *quarta Trebelliana*, but in the texts of the Roman Law it is called the *quarta Falcidia*. There was in fact no difference between them. We have mentioned above that Justinian enacted that an heir who did not avail himself of the benefit of inventory was not allowed to retain the fourth, and that a testator might in express terms deprive his heir of the right to do so (§ 345).

#### 354. FORMAL REQUIREMENTS OF FIDEICOMMISSUM.—For

<sup>73</sup> G. 2. 257; Paul. *Sent.* 4. 3. 2.

long there were not any. Ulpian says, "It is established that a fideicommissum can be given by a nod of the head".<sup>74</sup> But in practice fideicommissa were usually contained in a will or codicil, which in Justinian's system required the presence of seven and five witnesses respectively. If the writing was insufficiently witnessed or if there was no writing at all Justinian enacted that a person who alleged a fideicommissum might put the alleged fiduciary to the oath in the manner described in the text of the Institutes. Apart from this and from an oral will or codicil duly witnessed oral evidence of a fideicommissum was now inadmissible.

2. 23. 12.

355. Any person could leave a fideicommissum who could make a will.<sup>75</sup> Originally many persons could take a fideicommissum, who could not be instituted heirs or take a legacy or who though they had testamenti factio passiva had not the *jus capiendi* (§ 296). Thus peregrini could take, and caelibes and orbi. But most of these loopholes were closed by legislation.

356. FAMILY SETTLEMENTS.—An important use of the fideicommissum to which the Institutes affords no clue was to enable testators to tie up their property through successive generations. Thus a testator might leave his property to A whom he appointed his heir, and charge him to make it over on his death to B, and B might be similarly charged in favour of C; or there might be a general direction that the property was not to be alienated out of the family (*fideicommissum familiae*).<sup>76</sup> The will of a certain Dasumius, assigned to the year A.D. 108, which has been reconstructed from fragments of an inscription on marble, contains a gift of land to freedmen, with a direction that it is to remain with their descendants in perpetuity.<sup>77</sup> But not long afterwards Hadrian prohibited fideicommissa in favour of *incertae personae* (§ 357). It is not clear how far this was intended to restrict, and in fact restricted, family settlements. There is some indication that in the third century they were not allowed to extend beyond persons in being and the next (unborn) generation.<sup>78</sup> Justinian removed previously existing restrictions on gifts to *incertae personae*, thus opening the door to perpetual fideicommissa. By Novel 159, dealing with a particular will, he decreed that in that and all future cases the property might

<sup>74</sup> Ulp. XXV, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Ulp. XXV, 4.

<sup>76</sup> Dig. 31. 32. 6.

<sup>77</sup> Girard, *Textes*, p. 801.

<sup>78</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 363; *M.* p. 225.

not be tied up beyond the fourth generation. This may be described as the Roman Law against perpetuities. It passed into the modern systems derived from Roman Law, and though most of them have confined a testator's power of tying up property within more reasonable limits, it still exists in the law of Malta<sup>79</sup> and South Africa.<sup>80</sup> Justinian's rule was bad enough. The post-glossators made it worse by allowing a testator by sufficiently definite words to exclude its operation and to tie up the property in perpetuity. There was difference of opinion and of practice as to the meaning of the fourth generation. In South Africa it is understood to mean four generations after the first, *i.e.* four generations of fideicommissarii, the first fiduciarius not being taken into account. The property is free at last in the hands of the fifth fideicommissarius.

357. FIDEICOMMISSA OF SINGLE THINGS.—As we have seen above, a fideicommissum might serve as a substitute for the civil law legacy, and as a means of escape from the restrictions which attached to it. There were many differences between them, of which some persisted until and even after Justinian, others had disappeared before his time. The following enumeration is principally taken from Gaius.

1. A legacy was a charge imposed upon a testamentary heir. A fideicommissum might be charged upon an heir *ab intestato*,<sup>81</sup> or a legatee,<sup>82</sup> or a fideicommissary.<sup>83</sup>

2. A legacy could only be left by will, or by a codicil confirmed by will. A fideicommissum could be left by an unconfirmed codicil.<sup>84</sup>

3. Legacies were expressed in imperative terms and called for the use of the form appropriate to the particular kind of legacy intended. Fideicommissa were expressed in the language of request, and no form of words was required.<sup>85</sup>

4. Legacies (originally) must be in Latin. Fideicommissa might be in Greek or any other language.<sup>86</sup>

5. A legacy could not benefit a person who had not testamenti factio passiva, or who had not the *jus capiendi*. Originally fideicommissa were free from these restrictions. But in course of time this advantage was taken from them.

<sup>79</sup> *Strickland v. Strickland*, [1908] A. C. 551.

<sup>80</sup> Lee, p. 384.

<sup>81</sup> G. 2. 270; Inst. 2. 23. 10.

<sup>82</sup> G. 2. 271; Inst. 2. 24 pr.

<sup>83</sup> Inst. 2. 23. 11.

<sup>84</sup> G. 2. 270a.

<sup>85</sup> Ulp. XXIV, 1; G. 2. 249.

<sup>86</sup> G. 2. 281.

Thus peregrini were forbidden to take by fideicommissum and by a senatusconsultum made on the proposition of the Emperor Hadrian, any such gifts were forfeited to the fiscus.<sup>87</sup> The disabilities of caelibes and orbi were extended to fideicommissa by the senatusconsultum Pegasianum.<sup>88</sup> But Junian Latins remained capable of taking by fideicommissum, though they could not take directly as heirs or legatees (§ 71).<sup>89</sup>

6. Incertae personae and postumi alieni could not take by legacy. They could take by fideicommissum, until a senatusconsultum passed at the instance of the Emperor Hadrian applied the same rule to fideicommissa as to institutions and legacies.<sup>90</sup>

7. A gift of liberty could not be made directly to another man's slave; it could be made by fideicommissum.<sup>91</sup> This was done by directing a beneficiary to buy the slave and free him, or by leaving something to his owner with a direction to free him.<sup>92</sup> This usually, but not necessarily, produced the desired result.

8. While the formulary system lasted, legacies were sued for by formula, fideicommissa by "extraordinary" procedure before the consul or the praetor fideicommissarius and in the provinces before the praeses (§ 739).<sup>93</sup>

9. Legacies did not carry interest, if payment was unduly delayed; fideicommissa did.<sup>94</sup>

358. There had been a progressive assimilation of legacies and fideicommissa in the classical and post-classical periods, though the statement attributed to Ulpian in the Digest that "legacies have in all respects been made equal to fideicommissa"<sup>95</sup> has plainly been doctored. Justinian, as we have seen, completed the fusion of the two institutions, so that—to give one example—ownership now vested directly under a fideicommissum in any case in which it would have vested under a legacy. But a gift of liberty to another man's slave was necessarily made by way of fideicommissum, and a direction to the heir to manumit continued to be construed as fideicommissary, which gave the manumitting heir the rights of patronage, though it might have been construed as direct.

2. 20. 3.

<sup>87</sup> G. 2. 285.

<sup>88</sup> G. 2. 286.

<sup>89</sup> G. 1. 24; 2. 275.

<sup>90</sup> G. 2. 287.

<sup>91</sup> G. 2. 272.

<sup>92</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 221.

<sup>93</sup> G. 2. 278.

<sup>94</sup> G. 2. 280.

<sup>95</sup> Dig. 30. 1. 1.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK II (Tits. XXIII, XXIV)

## TITLE XXIII

*Of fideicommissary inheritances*

We now pass to fideicommissa; and let us first consider fidei- § 349.  
commissary inheritances.

1. It must be observed that in early times fideicommissa were not legally binding, for no one was compelled to give effect to a request unless he chose to do so. In those days if testators wished to leave an inheritance or a legacy to a person who was not legally § 347.  
competent to take under the will they committed it to the good faith of those who were. Such dispositions were called fideicommissa, because they created no legal obligation, but reposed merely on the conscience of those to whom the request was addressed. It was the Emperor Augustus who first ordered the consuls to interpose their authority so as to give them legal effect. It may be that on one or two occasions he wished to show favour to particular persons, or that a request had been made in the name of the Emperor's safety, or that there had been some signal instances of bad faith. This procedure seemed equitable and commended itself to the people, and so it developed into a regular jurisdiction. It was so much favoured that after a time a special praetor was appointed to exercise jurisdiction in the matter of fideicommissa, who was known as the praetor fideicommissarius.

2. The first condition of a fideicommissary inheritance is that § 349.  
some one should be directly instituted heir in the will, and that he should be charged with a trust to make over the inheritance to some one else. Without such an institution the will would be void. So when a testator has written, "Be Lucius Titius my heir", he may go on to say, "I request you, Lucius Titius, the moment you are able to enter on the inheritance, to render and restore it to Caius Seius". A testator may also request his heir to restore part of the estate. He may leave a fideicommissum absolutely or subject to a condition or to take effect from a stated future date.

3. When the inheritance has been restored the person who § 350.  
restores it none the less remains heir: the person to whom the inheritance is made over was sometimes regarded as heir, sometimes as legatee.<sup>95a</sup> 4. In the days of Nero, when Trebellius Maximus and § 351.  
Annaeus Seneca were consuls, a senatusconsultum was passed, providing that if an inheritance was restored in pursuance of a fideicommissum, all actions which at civil law could be brought by the heir or against the heir should be available to and against the person to whom the inheritance was restored. After this enactment the praetor began to give equitable actions to and against the person who took the inheritance, just as actions at law are brought by and against the heir. 5. But since the heirs who were usually requested § 352.  
to restore either the whole or nearly the whole of the inheritance

<sup>95a</sup> i.e., after the enactment described in s. 4.



often refused to accept an inheritance which offered no prospect or little prospect of gain, with the consequence that the *fideicommissa* failed to take effect, afterwards in the time of the Emperor Vespasian in the consulship of Pegasus and Pusio the Senate resolved that an heir who was requested to restore the inheritance might retain a quarter of it, just as the *lex Falcidia* allows him to retain a quarter against legacies. The same retention is allowed in the case of single things left by *fideicommissum*. After this *senatusconsultum* the heirs used to bear all the burdens of the inheritance, and a person who took part of the inheritance by *fideicommissum* was in the position of a *partiary* legatee, that is of a legatee to whom part of the inheritance went by way of legacy. This kind of legacy was called "a partition" (*partitio*), because the legatee divided the inheritance with the heir. Accordingly the stipulations which were made by the heir and the *partiary* legatee began to be employed between the heir and the person to whom the inheritance was restored, the object being to secure that the benefit and burden of the inheritance should be rateably apportioned between them.

6. It followed that if the instituted heir was requested to restore not more than three quarters of the inheritance, then, restoration was made as provided by the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum* and actions relating to the inheritance were given against each of the parties concerned in proportion to their shares, against the heir by civil law, against the person to whom the inheritance was made over by the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum* as if he were heir. But if the heir was desired to restore more than three quarters or even the whole inheritance, the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum* applied, and the heir, once he had entered on the inheritance, if he entered voluntarily, whether he retained the quarter or not, bore the whole burden of the inheritance. If the fourth was retained, the parties entered into the stipulations *partis et pro parte* which were usual between the *partiary* legatee and the heir; if the whole inheritance was made over, the stipulations usual in the case of the sale of an inheritance were employed. But if the instituted heir refuses to enter upon the inheritance on the ground that he has doubts as to its solvency, the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum* provides, that, on the demand of the person to whom he is requested to restore, the praetor shall order him to enter and to restore the inheritance, and actions are to be given to and against the person who takes the inheritance just as in cases coming under the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum*. In this case no stipulations are needed, because the heir is secured against loss, and actions arising out of the inheritance are transmitted to and against the person to whom the inheritance is made over, for in such an event the two *senatusconsulta* have the same effect.

§ 353.

7. Even the old lawyers were dissatisfied with these stipulations and the eminent Papinian describes them in some cases as legal quibbles. We have decided therefore, aiming, as always, at simplicity in our legislation, to abrogate the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum* and to lend full authority to the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum*, so that *fideicommissary* inheritances will in future be restored under

this enactment, whether the testator has allowed the heir to retain one fourth or less or more or nothing at all. But if by the terms of the will the heir is to keep nothing or less than one fourth, he is to be allowed to retain a fourth or so much as is needed to make up a fourth, or to recover it, if already paid; and in any case actions are to lie rateably against the heir and the fideicommissary as under the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum*. If the heir has voluntarily restored the inheritance, all actions connected with the inheritance are to be available for and against the fideicommissary exclusively. Lastly, we have transferred to the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum* the special provision of the *senatusconsultum Pegasianum* that when the instituted heir refused to enter, he might be compelled, if the fideicommissary desired it, to make over to him the whole inheritance, and then all actions were to be given to and against the fideicommissary, neither profit nor loss from the inheritance remaining with the heir. 8. It makes no difference whether it is a sole heir who is requested to restore the whole or part of the inheritance or an heir instituted to a share of the inheritance, who is asked to restore the whole or part of his share. The rules are the same in both cases.

9. If an heir is desired, after deducting or first taking some specific thing equivalent to one fourth of the estate, for instance a piece of land or any other thing, to restore the inheritance, restitution must be made as described above under the *senatusconsultum Trebellianum*, just as if the heir had been desired to retain the fourth part of the estate and make over the remainder. But there is this difference. In the first case all actions are transferred *in solidum*, and the heir retains the thing given to him free of any burden, just as if he were a legatee. In the second case the actions are divided in the proportion of one fourth and three fourths for and against the heir and fideicommissary respectively. Even though the thing which the heir is allowed to retain, or first take, may constitute the greatest part of the estate, none the less actions are transferred *in solidum* against the fideicommissary, and he must consider whether it is in his interest to have the inheritance transferred. The same principle applies if two or more things are to be deducted or taken first. It is the same if a sum of money amounting to a fourth or even to the greatest part of the estate is to be deducted or taken. All of this applies equally to an heir instituted to a share of the inheritance.

10. Moreover, a man who is going to die intestate may desire his civil law or praetorian successor to restore his whole inheritance or part of it or a specific thing, such as land, a slave, or money, to a named person. But there can be no legacy where there is no will.

11. A fideicommissary may in turn be requested to make over what he has received in whole or in part, or some other thing, to another person. 12. Fideicommissa then, as we have seen, depended at the beginning on the good faith of the heirs and this was what gave them their name and essential character. It was Augustus who made them legally binding; and now we in our anxiety to surpass that

- Emperor, have made a constitution, suggested by a case brought to our notice by the most eminent Tribonian, quaestor of our sacred palace, which provides that if a testator has trusted his heir to restore his inheritance or a special fideicommissum, and the matter cannot be proved by a written instrument or by five witnesses (the statutory number in the case of fideicommissa) because there are less than five witnesses, or no witnesses at all, then if the heir perfidiously denies the existence of any fideicommissum, the fideicommissarius, having first sworn to his own good faith, may put the heir under the necessity of either taking an oath that he never heard the testator say anything of the kind, or, if he declines to do so, of giving effect to the fideicommissum. The same procedure may be followed when the person charged to restore is a legatee, or himself a fideicommissary. If the person charged admits that something was left away from him, but seeks to take advantage of legal technicalities, he will unquestionably be compelled to give effect to the trust.
- § 354.

## TITLE XXIV

*Of single things left by fideicommissum*

- § 357. A man may leave single things by fideicommissum, for example, land, a slave, a garment, plate, or money, and desire the heir to restore it to some one, or similarly a legatee, though a legatee cannot be charged with a legacy. 1. A testator may leave by way of fideicommissum a thing which belongs to himself, or to his heir, or to a legatee or fideicommissarius or to any one else. Consequently, a legatee or fideicommissarius may be requested to restore not only the thing left to him, but any other thing, whether his own or some one else's. The only thing to be observed is that a man must not be asked to give up more than he takes under the will. Any direction in excess of this is without effect. When some one else's property is left by fideicommissum, the person charged must buy it and make it over or pay its value. 2. Freedom may be given to a slave by fideicommissum, when an heir, or a legatee or fideicommissarius is desired to manumit him. It makes no difference whether the slave belongs to the testator, or to his heir, or to a legatee or even to a stranger. If the slave belongs to some one else he must be purchased and manumitted. If the owner refuses to sell, as he may provided he has taken nothing under the testator's will, the gift of freedom does not immediately fail, but is postponed, because, as time proceeds, an opportunity may occur of buying the slave and making him free. If manumission takes place by way of fideicommissum the manumitted slave is not the freedman of the testator, although he owned him, but of the person who manumits. If, on the other hand, a slave is set free directly by a man's will, he is the testator's freedman (*libertus orcinus*); and no slave can get his freedom under a will directly, unless he belonged to the testator both when the will was made and at the time of death. A gift of freedom is understood to be direct, when a testator does not desire some one to manumit the
- § 358.
- § 67.

slave, but desires that he should derive his freedom, so to say, from the will. 3. Fideicommissa are usually constituted by such words as "I ask", "request", "desire", "authorise", "entrust". Any one of them has as much effect as all of them in combination.

## XV. CODICILS

359. Codicils and fideicommissa were closely connected in their origin and their subsequent history. Introduced, we are told, by Lucius Lentulus, who is credited with being the first to employ fideicommissa, they were approved by Trebatius, and when Labeo had made codicils, their validity was no longer open to question.<sup>96</sup>

360. Codicils, in the Roman meaning of the word, were informal written directions to an heir, often conveyed in a letter. For the first three centuries of the Empire no solemnity of form was required. Justinian, following earlier legislation of Constantine and Theodosius,<sup>97</sup> required seven witnesses for a will, five for a codicil. A codicil might be written or unwritten.<sup>98</sup> This gave a new meaning to the word codicil by converting it into a slightly less formal type of will, which like the more formal will might be either written or nuncupative. 2. 25. 3

361. It was not a necessary condition of the validity of a codicil that the deceased should have made a will. It might take effect as a direction to the heir *ab intestato*. If, however, there was a will, the codicil stood or fell with it, and avoidance of the will avoided the codicil also.<sup>99</sup> Codicils might precede or follow a will. In the former case they had *ab initio* the character of instructions to the heir *ab intestato*, and it might be supposed that they would be superseded by a subsequent will. Papinian required express confirmation if they were to retain their effect. The Emperors Severus and Antoninus allowed dispositions contained in them to take effect as fideicommissa, if the will did not indicate a contrary intention. Codicils more often followed the will. It was usual to confirm them in the will by anticipation by a special 2. 25. 1.

<sup>96</sup> Inst. 2. 25 pr. Nothing is known of Lucius Lentulus. Cicero mentions cases of fideicommissa (Roby I, 356). Perhaps Lentulus gave his name to a "leading case". Trebatius was a teacher of Labeo; Pomponius says that he wrote several books, which were not much in use in his time. Dig. 1. 2. 2, 45, 47. Horace introduces him in *Sat.* II. 1.

<sup>97</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 360. Inst. 2. 25. 3 is not up to date.

<sup>98</sup> Cod. 6. 36. 8, 3. In omne autem ultima voluntate excepto testamento quinque testes . . . debent adhiberi, sive in scriptis sive sine scriptis voluntas conficiatur. This is interpolated in a constitution of Theodosius.

<sup>99</sup> Dig. 29. 7. 3, 2.

3. 2. 6. clause. The will of Dasumius (*supra*, § 356), contains a clause which, as reconstructed, runs as follows : "If I shall have left anything written and sealed in codicils or by any other kind of disposition I desire it to be as valid as if it were written and sealed in my will." In another and later will executed in Egypt by a soldier, Caius Longinus Castor, in the year A.D. 189, which has been preserved almost intact, the formula runs<sup>100</sup> :—"If I have left anything hereafter written in my own hand, I wish it to be valid in any way soever." This gave effect to any subsequent codicil, provided that it was holograph, *i.e.*, written wholly in testator's own hand. It may be that this continued to be admitted in the later Empire as an exception from the general requirements of form. It is interesting to note that an almost identical clause, known as the reservatory clause, is in use to-day in South Africa.<sup>1</sup>

2. 25 2. 362. An unconfirmed codicil, if valid *qua* codicil, was adequate to create a fideicommissum,<sup>2</sup> but not, in the time of Gaius, to confer a legacy or to appoint a testamentary tutor.<sup>3</sup> After Justinian's legislation assimilating fideicommissa and legacies it made little difference whether a codicil was confirmed or unconfirmed. There remained one important difference between codicils and wills. A codicil could not regulate the devolution of the civil law inheritance. Therefore, it could neither appoint an heir, nor disinherit, nor attach a condition to an instituted heir, nor make a direct substitution. If a person purported to dispose of an inheritance by a document valid as a codicil, invalid as a will, it was a question of construction whether he meant to affect his heir *ab intestato* with a fideicommissum, or to institute a testamentary heir. In the first case the disposition held good, in the second not.<sup>4</sup> But even as early as Papinian it was admitted that a codicil might at least *ascertain* the heir. The case is put of a testator who leaves some part of the inheritance undisposed of by his will, and adds : "Be the person heir whom I make heir by codicil." Afterwards he instituted Titius by codicil. Papinian held that this was a good institution to the undisposed fraction of the estate, for the institution was deemed to be made under the will.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Girard, *Textes*, p. 308.

<sup>1</sup> Lee, p. 413.

<sup>2</sup> Dig. 29. 7. 3. 2.

<sup>3</sup> G. 2. 270a; G. 2. 289. *Secus*, if confirmed, Dig. 26. 2. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Dig. 29. 7. 13. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Dig. 28. 5. (78) 77.

363. To prevent a will miscarrying through some defect of form, it was usual to insert a clause desiring that the writing should also have the effect of a codicil.<sup>6</sup> This is known as the codicillary clause (*clausula codicillaris*). It imposed upon the *ab intestato* heir the duty of giving effect to the directions contained in the invalid will. Sometimes the codicillary clause was implied, *i.e.*, the *ab intestato* heir was held bound even in the absence of such a clause to give effect to the deceased's wishes.<sup>7</sup> Generally, a person claiming the estate or any part of it had to elect whether to claim under the will or under the codicillary clause as upon an intestacy. Having chosen the one alternative, he could not fall back upon the other. But in the case of near relatives this rule was not applied. "For it is not the same thing to lose what is your due and to miss a gift of fortune."<sup>8</sup>

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK II

#### TITLE XXV

##### *Of codicils*

Before the time of Augustus there was no law of codicils. They § 359.  
were introduced by Lucius Lentulus, with whom *fideicommissa* also had their origin. For when he was dying in Africa he wrote codicils, confirmed in advance by his will, in which he desired Augustus by way of *fideicommissum* to do something. The Emperor carried out his wishes, and others following his example discharged *fideicommissa*, and, in particular, the daughter of Lentulus paid legacies which were not enforceable at law. Thereupon, Augustus is said to have called together the lawyers and amongst them Trebatius, whose authority was very great at the time and to have asked them whether this could be admitted and whether there was anything in the use of codicils which was contrary to legal principle; and Trebatius is said to have recommended Augustus to allow them, because, (as he said) the practice was very useful and necessary for Roman citizens, on account of the long residence of men of those days away from home and often in distant countries, where, if a man could not make a will, he might at least make a codicil. After this when Labeo too had made codicils, their perfect admissibility was no longer questioned.

1. A man may not only make codicils when he has made a will § 361  
but if he is dying without a will he may leave *fideicommissa* by

<sup>6</sup> Dig. 29. 7. 1; Cod. 6. 36. 8, 1a.

<sup>7</sup> For instances, see Hunter, p. 829.

<sup>8</sup> Cod. 6. 36. 8, 2.

*codicil* When *codicils* had been made before the will Papinian held that they were without effect unless subsequently confirmed by a special declaration. But the Emperors Severus and Antoninus decided by rescript, that *fideicommissa* could be claimed under *codicils* preceding the will, if it appeared that the person who had subsequently made a will had not changed the intention which he had expressed in the *codicils*.

§ 362

2 By *codicils* an inheritance can neither be given nor taken away—were it otherwise there would be confusion between the law of wills and the law of *codicils*—and consequently no one can be disinherited by *codicil*. What is meant is that an inheritance can not be given or taken away directly. There is nothing to prevent an inheritance being left in a *codicil* by way of *fideicommissum*. *Codicils* cannot impose a condition on the instituted heir nor effect a direct substitution.

§ 360

3 A man may make as many *codicils* as he pleases and they may be executed without any solemnity.

## APPENDIX

### THE MODERN LAW OF TESTAMENTARY SUCCESSION

364 This concludes what we have to say about the Roman Law of testamentary succession. It has profoundly affected modern systems of law. We may distinguish three causes which have contributed to this result. The first was the influence of the Church, steadily exercised against intestacy. To die without having made a pious disposition of a considerable part of his estate was not good for a man's soul—or for the Church. The second was the survival, or reception, of Roman Law, which had the effect of driving competing principles out of the field or into the holes and corners of local custom. The third has been the absorption of much of the accumulated material in modern codes. In England there was no general reception, but here also much Roman Law found its way into the practice of the ecclesiastical Courts and the Court of Chancery, particularly in the matter of legacies. A fundamental difference between continental (and other civil law) systems on the one hand and English Law (and other common law systems) on the other is that the former retain the Roman Law heir, the successor in *universum jus quod defunctus habuit*, liable—saving the benefit of inventory—for the deceased person's debts even beyond the extent of the assets. This applies equally to testamentary and to intestate successors. In English Law the place of the heir is taken by the testamentary executor and in case of intestacy by an administrator appointed by the Court. If the deceased has made a will, but forgotten to appoint an executor, an administrator is appointed *cum testamento annexo*. The executor is not unknown to foreign systems, but his functions are limited. It rests with a testator to appoint an executor or not, as he pleases, and the Court does not supply the want if no appointment is made. In South Africa, in spite of the

civil law background, the English system of administration has been adopted. Heirs are commonly named in a will, but they are in fact merely residuary legatees.<sup>9</sup>

On the continent various types of will are in use, including *inter alia* the notarial will and the holograph will, that is a will written wholly in the handwriting of the testator, and signed by him, but not necessarily witnessed. This type of will is permitted also by the law of Scotland. In England, apart from the privileged will of soldiers and mariners<sup>10</sup> there has, since the Wills Act, 1837, been one will only, namely the will executed, as required by the statute, in the presence of two or more attesting and subscribing witnesses. This type of will has been introduced into South Africa, but there are others as well. A peculiarity of South African Law is that it is perhaps the only existing system of law which allows a testator to tie up his property for ever by a perpetual series of fideicommissa.<sup>11</sup>

## XVI. INTESTATE SUCCESSION

365. The Roman law of intestate succession was derived in order of historical sequence from four sources, namely:— I. The Twelve Tables; II. The Praetor's Edict; III. Imperial Legislation before Justinian's Novel 118; IV. Justinian's Novels.

366. I. THE LAW OF THE TWELVE TABLES.—By the Law of the Twelve Tables the succession went to (A) sui heredes; (B) the nearest agnate (*proximus agnatus*); (C) the members of the gens (*gentiles*).

367. SUI HEREDES. To be precise these were not successors to the deceased.<sup>12</sup> They had a vested interest during his lifetime.<sup>13</sup> This class consists of free persons in the power of the intestate who become sui juris on his death. It includes sons and grandsons, natural and adoptive, but grandsons only if their father has predeceased them or passed out of power by being given in adoption or emancipated while they continued in the power of their grandfather. In the old law a wife married to the deceased in manu counted as a daughter; his son's wife, similarly married, counted as a granddaughter, but was not a sua heres unless her husband had ceased to be in power before his father's death. Posthumous children were sui heredes if they would have been so if born during the ancestor's lifetime.

G 3 3.

<sup>9</sup> Lee, p. 353.

<sup>10</sup> Wills Act, 1837, s. 1; Wills (Soldiers and Sailors) Act, 1918, s. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Lee, p. 386.

<sup>12</sup> Dig. 28. 2. 11: post mortem patris non hereditatem percipere videntur, sed magis liberam bonorum administrationem consequuntur.

<sup>13</sup> G. 2. 157; Inst. 2. 19. 2: sed sui quidem heredes ideo appellantur quia domestici heredes sunt, et vivo quoque parente quodammodo domini existimantur.



368. Sui heredes became such even though they might be ignorant of the death of their ancestor, or insane. No authority of tutor, or consent of curator, was needed, if they were under age. The family ownership was, as it were, continued in the descendants immediately upon the death of the paterfamilias—statim morte parentis quasi continuatur dominium. Exceptionally, a person not in power on death might qualify as suus heres, *e.g.*, by returning from slavery and recovering his status jure postliminii (§ 107).
3. 1. 3. Conversely, it might happen that a person in power at death did not qualify as suus heres, as when the ancestor was posthumously pronounced guilty of treason and his estate was forfeited to the fiscus, though as Justinian suggests it might be more correct to say that he became suus heres, but ceased to be so when the condemnation was pronounced. The condemnation, however, had retrospective effect.
3. 1. 4.
3. 1. 5.

369. If all the sui were in the first degree of descent they took share and share alike with no preference of males over females. Children in the second or remoter degree took per stirpes, as representing their deceased parent. In determining who was suus heres regard was had not to the time of death, but to the time when it was ascertained that deceased died intestate. Therefore, if an extraneus who had been instituted heir ultimately refused the inheritance, and deceased left a son, who died after his father, but before the refusal of the inheritance, the son's son, if he had one, was suus heres to the deceased grandfather. It was not necessary that he should have been born, but he must have been conceived, in his grandfather's lifetime.
3. 1. 6.
3. 1. 7.
3. 1. 8.

370. PROXIMUS AGNATUS. Failing sui heredes the succession by the Law of the Twelve Tables went to the nearest agnate of the deceased. Si intestato moritur cui suus heres nec escit agnatus proximus familiam habeto. "If a man who has no suus heres dies intestate, the nearest agnate shall have the estate."<sup>14</sup> By "nearest" is meant the nearest when the fact of intestacy is ascertained. Succession in this class was per capita, not per stirpes, all agnates of equal degree taking equally and without representation. If the nearest agnate declined to enter or died before entry, the inheritance did not pass to a remoter agnate, nor to the next class, the gentiles.<sup>15</sup> By the civil law it was vacant, and any person might assume its rights and responsibilities. By doing so he became owner of the things comprised
3. 2. 6.
3. 2. 4.
3. 2. 7.

<sup>14</sup> G. 3. 9; Inst. 3. 2 pr.; Ulp. XXVI, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Buckl. M. 228.

in the inheritance at the end of a year (*usucapio pro herede*, § 163).<sup>16</sup> Subsequently to the Twelve Tables a rule came into existence unfavourable to female agnates. Beyond the second degree, *i.e.*, unless they were sisters of the deceased, they were excluded from the succession. Justinian attributes this to what he calls the *media jurisprudentia*, *i.e.*, juristic interpretation, subsequent to the Twelve Tables, but antecedent to imperial legislation. Paul says that this seems to have come about from applying the principle of the *lex Voconia* (*Voconiana ratione*).<sup>17</sup> This law, as has been seen, was unfavourable to women in the matter of testamentary succession (§ 293).

3. 2. 3.

371. **GENTILES.** Failing agnates the succession went to the members of the *gens*, which probably means to the *gens* as a unit. *Si agnatus nec escit, gentiles familiam habento*. "If there is no agnate the members of the *gens* shall have the estate." This was not strictly speaking succession, but a reversion to the gentile community from which the individual *paterfamilias* derived his right. This order of succession (so to call it) still existed in the time of Cicero, and even in the beginning of the first century A.D.<sup>18</sup> But the whole law of the *gens* was obsolete by the time of Gaius.

G. 3. 17.

372. The civil law canons of succession as time went on were felt to be open to serious objection. Thus:—

- (a) relations through females were wholly excluded; G. 3. 24.
- (b) there was no succession between mother and child except in case of marriage in *manu*;
- (c) nor of emancipated children or children given in adoption; G. 3. 19.
- (d) nor of collaterals, when the agnatic bond had been broken by *capitis deminutio*; G. 3. 21.
- (e) nor of remoter agnates, when the nearest agnate refused; G. 3. 22.
- (f) nor of female agnates beyond the degree of sisters; G. 3. 23.
- (g) nor, generally, of cognates who were not at the same time agnates. G. 3. 24.

These disadvantages were removed by the praetor. This brings us to the second period in the history of intestate succession.

373. **II. SUCCESSION UNDER THE PRAETOR'S EDICT.**—The praetor could not "make an heir",<sup>19</sup> but he could give

<sup>16</sup> G. 2. 52, 53.

<sup>17</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 4. 8. 20.

<sup>18</sup> Girard, p. 897, n. 1.

<sup>19</sup> G. 3. 32; Inst. 3. 9. 2.

bonorum possessio and enforce it by the *interdictum quorum bonorum*, the *hereditatis petitio possessoria*, and other remedies.<sup>20</sup> Bonorum possessio was the praetorian counterpart of the civil law succession. It was granted by the praetor, later by any magistrate, to persons who claimed to be entitled. In general this was matter of course, like, in our system, a grant of probate. Serious question as to the right of the applicant would only arise when he sought to take advantage of the interdict procedure. Bonorum possessio under the Edict was given in the event of a deceased person dying either testate or intestate, and in the first event either in conflict with the will or in accordance with it (*b. p. contra tabulas*—*b. p. secundum tabulas*). Failing a will, various classes of persons were entitled to claim as praetorian successors *ab intestato*. In the case of a free-born intestate four such classes were recognised and the corresponding bonorum possessiones were known as *b. p. unde liberi* (children), *unde legitimi* (statutory heirs or agnates), *unde cognati* (cognates), *unde vir et uxor* (husband and wife). The part of the Edict which determined the order in which the various persons or classes might advance their claims was known as the *edictum possessorium*, and they were entitled to claim in the order just stated. The word unde—"whence" or "by which"—has reference to the relevant section of the Edict—that part of the Edict "by which" children, etc., are called to the succession. The order of intestate succession was the result of a process of historical development. The four classes did not obtain recognition at the same time, and in the first case (*unde liberi*) it is probable that the praetor gave bonorum possessio sine re (without conclusive effect) before he gave it cum re (with conclusive effect), *i.e.*, to begin with, it was provisional merely, and could not be maintained against a *petitio hereditatis* of the civil law heir. It seems that bonorum possessio unde legitimi was known to Cicero, and the list of bonorum possessiones was probably complete by the time of Labeo.<sup>21</sup> We proceed to consider them in order.

374. (1) Bonorum possessio unde liberi. Under this head the praetor called to the succession together with the sui heredes emancipated sons and daughters (including sons and daughters given in adoption and subsequently emancipated by the adoptive parent) and the children of emancipated sons, but not children adopted by the deceased and subse-

<sup>20</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 238.

<sup>21</sup> Girard, p. 899.

quently emancipated nor children given in adoption and not subsequently emancipated. It must be remarked that this order of succession only exists in relation to a male ascendant, for it is a praetorian enlargement of the civil law class of sui heredes. 3. 1. 11.

375. (2) *Bonorum possessio unde legitimi*. This corresponds with the civil law succession of the *proximus agnatus*. The praetor made no addition, unless, as some thought, he admitted remoter agnates in this order. 3. 9. 3. G. 3. 28.

376. (3) *Bonorum possessio unde cognati*. This class comprises all blood relations through males or females as far as the sixth degree and the seventh in the case of the issue of second cousins; it includes children in an adoptive family, female agnates remoter than sisters, agnates who had undergone *capitis deminutio*, remoter agnates (unless they were admitted in the class above), mothers (unless, in the older law, married in manu) in succession to children and *vice versa*.<sup>22</sup> 3. 9. 3. 3. 5. 5 ; 3. 5. 3. G. 2. 29. G. 2. 27. G. 2. 28.

377. (4) *Bonorum possessio unde vir et uxor*. Failing cognates within the above-mentioned degrees the husband was admitted to the succession of the wife, and the wife to the succession of the husband. 3. 9. 3.

378. Since the praetor called these four classes to the succession one after the other it was necessary to fix a limit of time within which persons entitled in each class must make their claim. This was (normally) one year for children or parents, one hundred days for all other persons.<sup>23</sup> However, if the members of one class failed to claim within the time allowed, they had the opportunity of coming in in a later class. Thus *liberi* might claim in the *unde legitimi* class, or, if they failed to do so, in the *unde cognati* class. Similarly *legitimi* had another chance of claiming *unde cognati*.<sup>24</sup> But persons who had failed to claim in their proper class might find themselves bound to share with others to whom they would otherwise have been preferred.

379. When the praetor let in emancipated children along with children in power, he did so only upon condition that they brought into account all property which had accrued to them since emancipation; for, if they had not been emancipated, all their gains would have increased the fund available for distribution. This contribution was called *collatio bonorum*. A difficulty arose when a grandfather had eman-

<sup>22</sup> G. 2. 24; Inst. 3. 3 pr.

<sup>23</sup> Inst. 3. 9. 9. *in fine*; Dig. 38. 15. 4. 1. By "days" understand *dies utiles*, i.e., "days on which it was both lawful and *de facto* possible for the claim to be made". Buckl. *M.* p. 236.

<sup>24</sup> Dig. 38. 9. 1, 11.

ipated a son, retaining the son's children in power. Clearly, it would be unfair to the other children of the deceased to allow the emancipated son and his children to take together a double share in the succession. Julian provided for this case by introducing into the Edict a new clause, providing that in such case the father and his children should take one share between them (*nova clausula de conjungendis cum emancipato liberis ejus*).<sup>25</sup> The father made *collatio bonorum*, but only for the benefit of the children, since his coming in left the other *sui* no worse off than they were before.<sup>26</sup>

380. It will have been noticed that the praetor did not in every case depart from the civil law canons of succession. Sometimes he confirmed the civil law, *e.g.*, by giving *bonorum possessio* to *sui* or to the nearest agnate; sometimes he supplemented the civil law, *e.g.*, by admitting emancipati along with *sui*, or by allowing husband or wife to succeed in the last resort; sometimes he corrected the civil law, *e.g.*, by giving *bonorum possessio* to heirs instituted in a will which satisfied his requirements, but was not valid by civil law, or by substituting the class of *cognati* for the *gentiles*. His intervention therefore assumed three forms, to confirm, to supplement, to correct, *adjuvandi vel supplendi vel corrigendi juris civilis gratia*.<sup>27</sup> This, perhaps, represents the historical order of development. The praetor first confirmed, later supplemented, finally corrected.<sup>28</sup>

381. III. IMPERIAL LEGISLATION BEFORE NOVEL 118.—Many changes were made, which principally had the effect of promoting certain relatives whom the praetor admitted only as *cognates* to the more privileged position of *sui* or *legitimi*. The result was a complicated system which, including changes made by Justinian's own constitutions, unfortunately, is perpetuated in the *Institutes*. The only part of it to which we need direct attention is that which relates to the succession of mothers to children, and of children to mothers.

8. 3. 382. Succession of mothers to children. Justinian tells us that in a special case the Emperor Claudius gave a mother the succession to her children. A general rule was laid down by the *senatusconsultum Tertullianum*, which gave mothers who had the *jus liberorum* (§ 125) a statutory title to succeed to their children, but subject to the prior claims of the child's

<sup>25</sup> Dig. 37. 8. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Dig. 37. 8. 1, 13.

<sup>27</sup> Dig. 1. 1. 7, 1.

<sup>28</sup> This is Girard's view (p. 845), but other views are held.

children, father and brothers *ex parte paterna* (consanguinei). If there were sisters only the mother took a sister's share.<sup>29</sup> Justinian abolished the *jus liberorum* and other restrictions to which the mother had been subjected by later legislation, and gave her an absolute preference over all agnates; except that with brothers and sisters of the deceased (uterine brothers and sisters included) she shared the inheritance. Contrary to what might be inferred from the language of the *Institutes*, this enactment was not so much a recognition of a mother's claim to an early place in the scheme of succession as one more device to encourage the procreation of children. It is a belated application by the Emperor Hadrian of the policy of the *leges Julia* and *Papia Poppaea*.<sup>30</sup>

383. Succession of children to mothers. This was given by the *senatusconsultum Orfitianum* of A.D. 178, but limited to the first degree of descent. Later legislation extended it 3 4 to grandchildren. It was not affected by *capitis deminutio minima*. Like the *senatusconsultum Tertullianum* it applied to illegitimate no less than to legitimate issue.

384. IV. JUSTINIAN'S NOVELS.—In Novels 118 and 127 (A.D. 543, 548), Justinian superseded the old agnatic scheme of succession in favour of the claims of natural relationship. Under this system the succession went to the following classes :—

1. Descendants, the nearer excluding the more remote, with representation *per stirpes in infinitum*;
2. Ascendants, the nearer excluding the more remote, and brothers and sisters of the whole blood, the children, but not the grandchildren, of a deceased brother or sister representing the deceased (but only if a brother or sister remained alive). All of these (subject to representation) took equally. If there were ascendants only, equally near, the estate was divided, first by lines (paternal and maternal), and within each line by heads (thus a surviving paternal grandfather took half, surviving maternal grandparents divided the other half between them). Nephews and nieces, if no brother or sister were living, were not admitted in this class, but came in later in class 4 (or in class 3 if a half-brother or sister survived);
3. Half-brothers and -sisters and the issue of deceased

<sup>29</sup> Ulp. XXVI, 8.

<sup>30</sup> Buckl. T. p. 374.

half-brothers and -sisters in the first degree of descent with the same qualification;

4. Other collaterals without representation and with no limit of remoteness;
5. Husband and wife. This last order of succession is included on the authority of the *Basilica*. It is not mentioned in Novels 118 and 127.

385. Such in its latest phase was the Roman Law of intestate succession, which has profoundly affected the legal systems of Europe and through Europe of the remotest regions of the world. In France the districts of the written law adopted it from an early date. The "reception" made it part of the common law of Germany. In other countries, often under the patronage of the Church—*ecclesia vivit lege Romana*—it came into competition with rules of customary and feudal law. All three elements are present in the English Statutes of Distribution (1670, 1685), which were adopted in some other parts of the English-speaking world, and remained in force in this country until replaced by the provisions of the Administration of Estates Act, 1925.

386. Apart from matters of detail, two matters of general application mark the triumph of Roman principles in the modern law. The first is the admission of the principle of representation unknown to the customary law, first in the descending line, later in collateral lines. The second is the universal adoption of the Roman conception of relationship as a tree with its branches. The Germans from of old pictured it in the shape of the human body. The common ancestors made the head. Their children were in the neck, grandchildren in the shoulders, and so on through elbow and wrist to the three joints of the finger. This was the scheme of the *Sachsenspiegel*, a compilation dating from between 1220 and 1235. The *Schwabenspiegel* (1274-5) placed the children in the shoulder not in the neck, but included the nail. Both systems agreed, therefore, in carrying relationship to the fourteenth Roman degree. Before the fourth Lateran Council (A.D. 1215) this marked the limit of the prohibited degrees for marriage (*viz.*, sixth cousins). The Lateran Council cut this down to the fourth canonical degree (third cousins), and the *codex juris canonici* limits the prohibition to the third canonical degree (second cousins).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> c. 1076, § 2: In linea collateralis [matrimonium] irritum est usque ad tertium gradum inclusive. In calculating collateral relationship the Canon Law reckons degrees down from the common ancestor, and, if the persons whose relationship is in question are not equally remote from the

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK III (Tits. I—VI, IX)

## TITLE I

*Of intestate succession*

A man dies intestate if he has made no will, or if he has made an invalid will, or if his will has been broken or rendered inoperative, § 314. or if no heir has accepted the inheritance.

1. By the Law of the Twelve Tables the inheritances of intestates belong in the first instance to the *sui heredes*. 2. Those persons are § 367. said to be *sui heredes* who were in power of the deceased at the time of his death, as son and daughter, grandson and granddaughter by a son, great-grandson and great-granddaughter by a grandson born of a son. It makes no difference whether children are natural or adoptive; and we must include also children legitimated by *oblatio curiae* or *per subsequens matrimonium*. This takes place in terms of § 95. our constitutions when a man has been living with a woman not as his wife, but whom he could have married, and has had children by her; if afterwards, wishing to make her his wife, he has executed a marriage contract, and had children by her, then not only the children born after the constitution of the *dos*, but those born before, who have been the occasion of the legitimacy of those born afterwards, are to be legitimate and in the power of the parent. This is to apply even if no children have been born after the execution of the dotal instrument, or if they have been born, and subsequently died.<sup>32</sup> Grandchildren and great-grandchildren are not reckoned among *sui heredes*, unless the person in the preceding degree has ceased to be in power in consequence of death or for any other reason such as emancipation; for if at the time of death a son was in power, a grandson by that son cannot be *suus heres*. The same applies to remoter descendants. Posthumous children too who would have been in power, if born in the parent's lifetime, are *sui heredes*. 3. Descendants become *sui heredes* even though they are ignorant of their right, or chance to be insane; for in any case in which an inheritance is acquired in spite of ignorance, it is equally acquired in spite of insanity. From the moment of the parent's death the ownership is, so to say, continued in the successor. No authority of tutor is required in the case of *pupilli*, nor consent of curator, when the heir is insane. The inheritance vests by mere force of law.

4. It may happen that though a person was not in power at the § 368.

common ancestor, the longer line marks the degree of relationship. Thus a grandson is in the second degree of relationship to his grandfather, but also to his uncle and to his first cousin, and in the third degree to his first cousin's children. The Roman Law traces the degrees up and then down. A grandson stands in the second degree to his grandfather, the third to his uncle, the fourth to his first cousin. Blackst. *Commentaries*, II, p 206.

<sup>32</sup> Cod. 5. 27. 10 & 11.



time of death, he nevertheless is *suus heres* to his parent, as when a person returns from foreign slavery after his father's death. This is the effect of *postliminium*.

§ 107.

5. Conversely, although a person is a member of the family at the time of death, he may, nevertheless, not be a *suus heres*. This happens if a father has been adjudged guilty of treason after his death, so that a stigma of infamy is attached to his memory. He cannot have a *suus heres*, since the estate escheats to the *fiscus*. Perhaps, it would be more correct to say that the successor becomes *suus heres*, but ceases to be so.

§ 369.

6. When there are children and grandchildren by another child they are called together to the succession, and the nearer in degree do not exclude the more remote; for it seems fair that a son's children should take their father's place. Similarly, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are called together; and since it is settled that grandchildren and great-grandchildren succeed to their parents' place, it is consistent with this that the inheritance should be distributed not in capita, but in stirpes, so that, for example, a son takes half the inheritance, and two or more grandchildren by another son take the other half between them. Again, if there are grandchildren by two sons, say, one or two by one son, three or four by another, then half the inheritance goes to the one or two, the other half to the three or four. 7. When the question arises whether a person can be a *suus heres*, we must look to the time at which it is certain that a man has died intestate, which may occur because no one accepts the inheritance. Therefore, if a son has been disinherited, and a stranger instituted in his place, and then the son dies, and afterwards it is ascertained that the instituted heir does not become heir under the will because he will not or cannot be heir, then, the grandson will be *suus heres*, because at the time when it was ascertained that the *paterfamilias* died intestate, the grandson was the only survivor. This is settled law.

8. Even if he was born after his grandfather's death, still if he was conceived in his grandfather's lifetime, and his father dies and no one is heir under the will, he becomes *suus heres* to his grandfather. Of course, if he is both conceived and born after his grandfather's death, he will not in these circumstances be *suus heres* to his grandfather, because there was no bond of relationship between him and his father's father. Again, the adopted son of an emancipated son is not reckoned amongst the grandfather's children. Such persons not being entitled to succeed in the quality of children are just as little entitled to claim possession of goods in the character of nearest cognates.

§ 374

9. Emancipated children have no right to the inheritance by civil law, for they are not *sui heredes*, having ceased to be in the power of their parent, and the Law of the Twelve Tables does not admit them by any other title. But the praetor, moved by considerations of natural equity, gives them possession of goods in the *unde liberi* class, just as if they had been in power at the time of the parent's death, whether they are the only children or whether they concur

with children who remained in power. Therefore, if there are two children, one emancipated and one who was in power at the time of death, the latter is the sole heir at civil law. but since the emancipated child is by the praetor's indulgence admitted to a share in the inheritance, the *suus heres* will in effect be heir only to one half.

10. Emancipated children who have given themselves in adoption are not admitted to the succession of their natural father in the class of children, that is, if when he dies they are in the adoptive family; for if in his lifetime they have been emancipated by the adoptive father they are admitted to the succession of their natural father, just as if he had himself emancipated them and they had never been in the adoptive family. Consistently with this, they become strangers to the adopting father. But if they are emancipated by the adoptive father after the death of their natural father, they are, as before, strangers to the adopting father, and are not, any the more for that, entitled to rank as children in succession to their natural father. The law has been settled in this sense, because it would be unfair that the adoptive father should be able to determine whether the natural father's estate should go to his children or to his agnates.

11. Adoptive children, therefore, are in a worse position than natural children. The latter after emancipation by the indulgence of the praetor retain the rank of children, though they lose it by civil law. But adoptive children after emancipation lose the position of children by civil law, and are not aided by the praetor. This is as it should be; for the theory of the civil law cannot destroy the claims of nature, and if they cease to be *sui heredes*, they do not therefore cease to be children or grandchildren. But adoptive children on emancipation become strangers to the adoptive parent, for the right and name of son or daughter which they acquired by adoption they lose by another process of civil law, namely emancipation.

12. The same applies in the case of the possession of goods which the praetor gives in opposition to the will to children who have been passed over, that is, neither instituted nor duly disinherited. For the praetor admits to this possession children in power at the time of death, and emancipated children, but not children who are in an adoptive family when the natural parent dies. But adoptive children who have been emancipated by the adoptive parent have no claim to succeed upon his intestacy, and still less are entitled to *contrabular* possession, for they have ceased to be reckoned as children. § 300.

13. It must be remarked, however, that children who are in an adoptive family, or who have been emancipated by their adoptive parent after the death of their natural parent, though not admitted to the succession of their natural parent in the class of "children", nevertheless come in under another part of the edict, which calls cognates to the succession, provided always that they are not excluded by "children" (*sui heredes* or emancipated) nor by any agnatic relation; for the praetor calls to the succession first "children", then the statutory heirs, then the nearest cognates. 14. All this was

the old law. But our constitution<sup>33</sup> has amended the law with regard to children given in adoption by their natural fathers. Cases occurred in which sons by being given in adoption lost the right of succeeding to their natural parents, and then, the adoption being easily dissolved by emancipation, were not called to the succession of either parent. This our constitution corrects by providing that when a natural parent gives his son in adoption to another, the son is to retain all his rights, just as if he had remained in his natural father's power and no adoption had taken place, the only change being that he acquires the right of intestate succession to his adoptive father. But if the adoptive father has made a will the adoptive son is to have no claim to the estate either by civil law or by praetorian law, neither by applying for possession of goods against the will, nor by bringing the *querela inofficiosi testamenti*; for the adoptive father is not under any obligation either to institute him heir or to disinherit him, since there is no natural relationship between them, not even in the case of the adoption of one of three male children under the *senatusconsultum Afnianum*.<sup>34</sup> There is one exception, namely, when the adopting father is a natural ascendant, for since the rights of civil law and of nature meet in his person, we have left the old law to take its course, just as when a *paterfamilias* gives himself in adoption; all of which may be gathered from the above-mentioned constitution.

† 106.

15. Further, the old law, giving a preference to the issue of males, called to the succession as *sui heredes* only grandchildren by sons; grandchildren by daughters, on the other hand, and great-grandchildren by grand-daughters ranked merely as cognates, and were postponed to the agnates, in succession to a maternal grandfather or great-grandfather or to a grandmother or great-grandmother, paternal or maternal. But the Emperors have not left this outrage on nature without amendment, and since the words grandson and great-grandson apply indifferently to descendants through males and through females, they have given them the same degree and order of succession. But, in order to give some advantage to those whose claim is based not only on natural relationship, but also supported by the rules of the old law, they decided that the share of grandsons or granddaughters or remoter descendants through females should be somewhat reduced, so that they should take one third less than their mother or grandmother would have taken, or their father or grandfather, paternal or maternal, when succession to a female was in question. When any of the above-mentioned persons, even if they were the only descendants, took up the succession, the agnates were excluded; and just as the Law of the Twelve Tables when a son is dead, calls to the succession grandsons or granddaughters, great-grandsons or great-granddaughters to take the place of their father in succession to their grandfather, so imperial legislation calls them, subject to the deduction above mentioned, to the succession in place of their mother or grandmother. 16. But since a question still remained between the agnates and descendants through females, the agnates claiming a quarter of the estate by virtue of a certain constitution, we have not

<sup>33</sup> Cod. 8, 47(48). 10.

<sup>34</sup> Cod. 8, 47(48). 10, 3. The date and the motive of this S.C. are unknown. Girard, p. 195, n. 4.

admitted this constitution into our code, or allowed it to be reproduced from the Code of Theodosius.<sup>35</sup> The constitution which we have promulgated has deprived it of all authority, and we have enacted<sup>36</sup> that if any such grandchildren by a daughter, or great-grandchildren by a granddaughter, and so on, are in existence, the agnates are to have no share in the succession, so that collateral relations may not be preferred to the direct line of descent. Division of the inheritance is to be made as *under the old law in stirpes*, so that, for example, if in one line there are one or two children, in another three or four, one half of the inheritance goes to the one or two, the other half to the three or four.

## TITLE II

*Of the statutory succession of agnates*

If there is no *suus heres*, nor any of those whom the praetor or the imperial constitutions call to the succession along with the *sui heredes* to take the succession in any way, the inheritance by the Law of the Twelve Tables belongs to the nearest agnate. 1. Agnates, as we have explained in the first book, are relations through males. Thus brothers born of the same father are agnates to one another and are termed *consanguinei*, and it is not necessary to enquire whether they have the same mother. Similarly, a father's brother is an agnate to his brother's son, and conversely. To the same class belong brother's sons (*patrueles*—*consobrini*) and the same principle applies to remoter degrees of relationship. Children born after their father's death are similarly related. The law does not give the inheritance to all agnates simultaneously, but only to those who are in the nearest degree when it is ascertained that the deceased died intestate. § 370. 1. 15 1.

2. Agnatic relationship is also created by adoption, as between natural sons and sons whom the father has adopted. These too are called *consanguinei* in relation to one another. Similarly, if another of your agnatic relations, a brother, a father's brother or one further remote has adopted a son, you are agnates to one another. 3. Male relatives (through males) are admitted to the inheritance by title of agnation in any degree, however remote. But in the case of females the rule was that sisters might succeed, but no remoter female agnate; while in succession to them any male agnate was entitled, however remote. Consequently, you succeeded to the daughter of your own brother or of your father's brother, or to your father's sister, but they did not succeed to you. This was so ordained, because it was thought better that inheritances should, as a rule, go to males rather than to females. But, since it was unfair that they should be entirely excluded as if they were strangers to the family; the praetor admitted them in the *unde cognati* group, but postponed them to agnates and to nearer cognates. 3a. This rule is not to be found in the Law of the Twelve Tables, which did not distinguish between male and female agnates, whatever the degree of relationship. It was the invention of an intermediate jurisprudence, subsequent to the Twelve Tables,

<sup>35</sup> Cod. Theod. 5. 1. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Cod. 6. 55. 12.

but anterior to the imperial constitutions. The praetor's edict went some way towards correcting this anomaly, but not far enough. 3b. Our constitution, therefore, reverts to the rule of the Twelve Tables, and admits all female agnates to the succession equally with male agnates of the same degree. 4. And it<sup>37</sup> makes one further change, by transferring one degree only of cognatic relationship to the agnatic group, with the result that in succession to an uncle are called not only his brother's children but also the children (not remoter descendants) of his sister, whether of the whole or of the half blood on either side, just as if they were agnatically related to the deceased. This must be understood to be the case only if there are no brothers or sisters in existence, who accept the inheritance. For they being nearer in degree exclude the more remote, since in this class the inheritance is divided not *ad stirpes* but in *capita* i.e. equally amongst relatives nearest in degree. 5. If there are agnatic relatives of different degrees of remoteness, the Law of the Twelve Tables expressly calls to the succession the nearest. Therefore, if the deceased is survived by a brother and another brother's son, or by a father's brother, the brother is preferred. Although the Law speaks of "the nearest agnate" (in the singular number), there is no doubt that if there are several agnates of the same degree they are all admitted. Similarly, though "nearest" properly implies nearest of several, there is no doubt that though agnates are found in one degree of remoteness only, the inheritance belongs to them. 6. To ascertain who is nearest, if the deceased died without having made a will, we ask who was nearest at the time of death; but if the deceased made a will we ask who was nearest when it was ascertained that there was not going to be any testamentary heir, for it is not till then that a person can properly be said to have died intestate. Sometimes this takes place only after a considerable interval of time, and it often happens that owing to the nearest having died the person who eventually is nearest was not the nearest at the time of death.

7. At first no succession of members of this class was admitted, that is to say, if the person entitled as nearest refused the inheritance or died before accepting it, this did not any the more entitle remoter agnates to succeed. Here again the praetors found a partial remedy, admitting them as cognates. But we, desiring to bring the law to the highest possible state of perfection, have decreed in our constitution<sup>38</sup> relating to the rights of patrons that succession shall not be refused to remoter agnates; for it was really absurd to withhold from agnates a right which the praetor made available to cognates, particularly in view of the fact that the burden of tutelage passed to remoter agnates failing the nearest degree, and that the existing law withheld an advantage where it imposed a burden.

§ 118. 8. Another case of statutory succession is that of the parent who has emancipated a son or daughter or other descendant with a trust agreement. Under the old law an express agreement was necessary, but by our constitution<sup>39</sup> it is implied in all emancipations of children.

<sup>37</sup> Cod. 6. 58. 14.

<sup>38</sup> Cod. 6. 4. 4. 20.

<sup>39</sup> Cod. 8. 48(49). 6.

## TITLE III

*Of the senatusconsultum Tertullianum*

The Law of the Twelve Tables applied so strictly the principle of preferring issue through males and excluding issue through females § 372. that it did not admit a reciprocal right of succession between a mother and her children. The praetors, however, allowed them to succeed to one another in the class *unde cognati*. 1. But this narrowness of the law was afterwards amended. It was the Emperor Claudius who first allowed a mother a statutory succession to her children as a consolation for their loss. 2. Afterwards the *senatusconsultum Tertullianum*, enacted in the time of the Emperor Hadrian, made full provision for the melancholy succession of a mother (not of a grandmother) by providing that a mother who had the *jus liberorum*, that is, who had three children, if she was free-born, or four, if she was a freedwoman, might succeed *ab intestato* to her sons or daughters, even though she was in the power of an ascendant, in which case she would require his order to accept the inheritance. 3. The mother is postponed to children of a deceased son, whether *sui* or reckoned as such, whether of the first or a further degree of descent; and by imperial constitutions the son and daughter of a deceased daughter are preferred to the daughter's mother, that is to their own grandmother. The father also is preferred to the mother, but not a grandfather or great-grandfather, that is to say when it is a question simply between them and the mother.<sup>40</sup> Further, a brother born of the same father excluded the mother in succession to a son or daughter, but a sister born of the same father was admitted together with the mother. If there were brother and sister, they took in equal shares excluding the mother. 4. But by a constitution which we have placed in our code we have thought proper to come to the aid of the mother, having regard to the claims of nature and the perils of child-birth. For why should a woman be punished for not having the required number of children? We have therefore given mothers, whether free-born or freed-women, a full right of succession in the statutory class even though they may not have had any child except the one whose succession is in question.<sup>41</sup>

5. The earlier constitutions partly aided the mother, and partly put her at a disadvantage by reducing her share by one third in favour of certain agnatic relations. But we have decided to take the straight simple course of preferring the mother to all statutory claimants in succession to her children without any deduction; except that brothers and sisters, whether related by agnation or by cognation to the deceased (who by our legislation are placed first in the order of statutory succession) are called to the succession along with the mother;

<sup>40</sup> If a grandfather had emancipated a grandson, retaining the father in power, the father excluded the mother, and by so doing was the occasion of the grandfather succeeding as *paterfamilias*. If the father was dead, the mother was preferred to the grandfather.

<sup>41</sup> Cod. 8. 58. 2.

if there are sisters only the mother takes one half, the sisters divide the other half amongst them; if the deceased is survived by a brother or brothers with or without sisters, the inheritance is distributed in capita between him or them and the mother.<sup>42</sup> 6. But as we have provided for mothers, so they ought to consult the interest of their children; and mothers must know that if they have failed to apply within a year for guardians to be appointed to their children or to take the place of a guardian who has been removed or excused, they will deservedly be excluded from the succession to their children who die under the age of puberty.<sup>43</sup> 7. By the *senatusconsultum* mothers succeed even to their illegitimate children.

#### TITLE IV

##### *Of the senatusconsultum Orfitianum*

- § 383. Conversely, children are admitted to the succession of mothers who die intestate by the *senatusconsultum Orfitianum*, which was passed in the consulship of Orfitus and Rufus in the time of the Emperor Marcus. This gave a statutory succession to sons and daughters, even though in power, in preference to brothers and sisters and remoter agnates of a deceased mother. 1. The *senatusconsultum* did not call grandchildren to the succession of a grandmother, but this was afterwards amended by imperial constitutions. 2. It must be remarked that rights of succession under the Tertullian and the Orfitian *senatusconsulta* are not lost by *capitis deminutio*. This is in accordance with the rule that new statutory inheritances are not destroyed in this way, but only those which are given by the Law of the Twelve Tables. 3. Even illegitimate children succeed to their mother under this *senatusconsultum*.
- § 324. 4. If of several statutory heirs, some have renounced the inheritance or failed to accept it, either because they have died before acceptance, or have been prevented from accepting by some other cause, their share accrues to the rest who accept, or to their heirs if they die before the accrual of the lapsed portion.

#### TITLE V

##### *Of the succession of cognates*

- § 376. After *sui heredes*, and those whom the praetor and the constitutions call to the succession together with them and after statutory successors (that is agnates and those whom the above-mentioned *senatusconsulta* and our constitution advance to the rank of agnates) the praetor calls the nearest cognates. 1. In this class of successors regard is had to natural relationship. Agnates who have undergone *capitis deminutio* and their issue do not rank as statutory

<sup>42</sup> Cod. 6. 56. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Cod. 6. 58. 10.

heirs by the Law of the Twelve Tables, but are called by the praetor in the class of cognates, except that the law of the Emperor Anastasius calls to the succession of a deceased brother or sister emancipated brothers and sisters (not their children) together with those whose right of succession remains unimpaired, not indeed on equal terms, but with a certain deduction, as appears from the language of the constitution<sup>44</sup>; they are preferred, however, to remoter agnates, even those that have not suffered *capitis deminutio* and, undoubtedly, to cognates. 2(1). Relatives through females in a collateral line are called by the praetor in the third order of succession *unde cognati*.

3(2). Children who are in an adoptive family are in the same order of succession to their natural parents.

4(3). That illegitimate children have no agnatic relations is evident, for agnation means relationship on the father's side (while cognation means relationship through the mother as well) and illegitimate children are supposed to have no father. On the same principle they cannot be held to be related to one another as consanguinei (*i.e.*, as having a common father), because consanguinity is a species of agnation. They are therefore merely cognates to one another, as they are too to their mother's cognates. So all such persons may take advantage of the *bonorum possessio unde cognati*.

5(4). It must be added that a person may be admitted to the inheritance by title of agnation, though he is in the tenth [or any remoter] degree,<sup>44a</sup> whether under the Twelve Tables or in the class to which the praetor offers *bonorum possessio unde legitimi*. But the praetor does not promise succession in the class of cognates beyond the sixth degree and the seventh in the case of the children of second cousins.

## TITLE VI

### *Of the degrees of relationship*

Some explanation of the degrees of cognatic relationship may be useful. This is calculated either in the ascending line, or in the descending line, or in the side line (or, as we say, collaterally). 1. Relations in the first degree are father and mother in the ascending line, son and daughter in the descending line. 2. In the second degree, grandfather and grandmother ascending, grandson and granddaughter descending, and in the collateral line brother and sister.

3. In the third degree, ascending great-grandfather and great-grandmother, descending great-grandson and great-granddaughter, in the collateral line a brother or sister's son and daughter, a father's or mother's brother or sister.

<sup>44</sup> Cod. 5. 30. 4.

<sup>44a</sup> The tenth degree is mentioned merely by way of illustration.



not definitely included in any of the above-mentioned classes of testamentary or intestate successors, but to whom he afforded this ultimate and extraordinary remedy, adapted to the special circumstances created by legislative enactment. 9 (8). Thus the praetor introduced several kinds of succession and arranged them in order, but within each class it often happened that there were several persons in different degrees of relationship to the deceased. So in order that creditors should not suffer delay in bringing their actions, but might have some persons against whom they might proceed, and on the other hand might not too readily be allowed to consult their own interest by being let into possession of the goods of the deceased, the praetor defined certain periods for claiming possession of goods.

§ 378. (9). These were in the case of children and parents natural and adoptive one year, in all other cases one hundred days. 10. If any one fails to claim within the time allowed, his right accrues to other persons of the same degree; and if no one claims, the praetor offers possession of goods to persons subsequently entitled, as laid down in the part of the edict dealing with succession, just as if there had not been any one in the preceding class. If any one has renounced the *bonorum possessio* offered to him, it is not necessary to wait until the time limited for his acceptance has expired, but the edict immediately admits the persons next entitled.

11. In calculating the periods *dies utiles* only are taken into account. 12(10). Earlier Emperors have very wisely provided that a claimant need not trouble to apply for possession of goods, but may take full advantage of its benefit, in whatsoever way he may have manifested (of course within the time prescribed) his intention of asserting his claim.

## XVII. SUCCESSION TO FREEDMEN

387. This is a subject which most manuals of Roman Law dismiss with little, if any notice, and we shall be content to do the same, merely referring the reader, if he wishes to pursue the subject, to the text and to Buckland's *Textbook and Manual*, where the subject is treated in some detail. As appears from the Institutes, the law passed through several stages and in all of them the patron (or his family) was in certain circumstances entitled to claim the whole or part of a deceased freedman's estate. Though by Novel 78 Justinian for most purposes abolished the distinctions which had previously existed between *ingenui* and *libertini*, this did not affect the law of succession unless expressly renounced by the manumitter (§ 69).

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK III (TITs. VII-IX)

## TITLE VII

*Of the succession to freedmen*

Let us now consider the succession to freedmen. In ancient times a freedman was allowed to pass over his patron in his will with impunity: for the Law of the Twelve Tables called a *patron* to the succession of his freedman only if the freedman died intestate without leaving a *suus heres*. So if he died intestate and left a *suus heres*, the patron had no right of succession. If the *suus heres* was a natural-born child there was no ground of complaint; but if he was an adopted son, it was clearly unfair that the patron should be entirely excluded. 1. Accordingly the praetor's edict introduced an amendment. If the freedman made a will he was required to leave his patron half of his estate. If he left him nothing at all, or less than half, the patron was given *bonorum possessio* of one half against the tablets of the will. If he died intestate leaving as his *suus heres* an adopted son, equally the patron was given *bonorum possessio* of the half against this son. The patron was excluded by natural children, not only such as were in power at the time of death, but also those that had been emancipated or given in adoption, provided that they had been instituted to some share in the inheritance, or, being passed over, had obtained *contra-tabular bonorum possessio*. Disinherited children did not in any way exclude the patron. Subsequently the *lex Papia* enlarged the rights of patrons who had wealthy freedmen. It provided that if a freedman left a fortune of one hundred thousand sesterces and less than three children, whether he died testate or intestate, a child's portion should go to the patron. Accordingly, if the freedman left one son or daughter, the patron took half the estate just as if he had died childless; if he left two children the patron took one third; if three children, nothing. 3. The whole matter is now regulated by a constitution which we have issued in the Greek language.<sup>48</sup> If a freedman or a freedwoman leaves an estate of less than one hundred aurei (we take this to be the equivalent of the one hundred thousand sesterces of the *lex Papia*, counting each thousand sesterces as one aureus) and has made a will, the patron is excluded. If he or she dies intestate without children the patron succeeds as under the Law of the Twelve Tables. If the estate amounts to [one hundred aurei or] more than one hundred aurei and there are children of either sex or of any degree entitled to succeed as heirs or to have possession of the goods, they take to the exclusion of patrons and their issue. If the freedman or freedwoman dies intestate and without children the whole estate goes to the patron or patroness. If they have made a will and passed over the patron or patroness, having no children or having disinherited the children (or in the case of a mother or maternal grandmother having passed them over in silence in circumstances excluding the *querela inofficiosi testamenti*), then by our constitution the patron or patroness is to have, not as before one half, but a clear third of the estate unburdened by legacies or *fideicommissa* (these to be charged on coheirs). If they have been given less than a third the deficiency is to be made good to them. When patrons are called to the succession this must be understood to include patrons of either sex, their children and collateral relatives to the fifth degree. If, however, there are several descendants

<sup>48</sup> Cod. 6. 4. 4. The original text does not exist. Its substance is repeated in the *Basilica*.

of a patron or patroness, or of two or more such, the nearest in degree is to take the succession of the freedman or freedwoman, which is to be divided not among the stocks (*per stirpes*), but by counting the heads of those nearest in degree (*per capita*). And the same rule is to be observed with collaterals; for we have made the law of succession to freedmen almost identical with that relating to freeborn persons.<sup>49</sup>

§ 71.

4. All this applies to freedmen who are Roman citizens, for to-day there are no others, the status of *deditici* and of Junian Latins having been abolished; and in fact there could not be any question of succession to Junian Latins, because, though they lived free, they lost their freedom with their last breath, and the manumitting masters retained their goods under the *lex Junia* in a way by right of *peculium* as if they were slaves. But afterwards the *senatusconsultum Largianum*<sup>50</sup> provided that children of the manumitter, not expressly disinherited, should be entitled to the goods of a Latin in preference to the manumitter's extraneous heirs. This was followed by an edict of the Emperor Trajan, which directed that if a Latin obtained a grant of citizenship by imperial favour against the will or without the knowledge of his patron, he should live a citizen, but die a Latin. But all these enactments are repealed by our constitution,<sup>51</sup> and the roads which formerly led to the Latin status together with some others are now the means of access to Roman citizenship.

## TITLE VIII

*Of the assignment of freedmen*

Before leaving the subject of succession to freedmen we may observe that the senate resolved that a patron might assign a freedman to one of his children, so as to entitle him to succeed as patron after his father's death, to the exclusion of the other children. But if the child to whom the freedman is assigned dies childless their right revives.

1. Assignment may be made not only of a freedman, but also of a freedwoman, and not only to a son or grandson, but also to a daughter or granddaughter. 2. This right of assignment is given to a father who has two or more children in power. What then if he has made an assignment to one of them whom he afterwards emancipates? Does this destroy the assignment? It is settled that it does, as held by Julian and most other jurists.

3. The assignment may be made by testament or without testament, and in any terms whatever as allowed by a *senatusconsultum* made in the time of the Emperor Claudius in the consulship of Sullus Rufus and Ostorius Scapula.

## TITLE IX

*Of possession of goods*

§ 118.

3. In the third place the praetor gives the possession to the ten persons whom he preferred to the extraneous manumissor (*b.p. unde decem personae*). These are father, mother, grandfather and grandmother (paternal and maternal), son and daughter, grandson and granddaughter (by a son or by a daughter), brother and sister (issue of the father or of the mother). . . . Fifthly, to the nearest member of the family of the

<sup>49</sup> Moyle's translation has proved helpful in this passage.

<sup>50</sup> A.D. 42.

<sup>51</sup> Cod. 7. 6. 1.

patron (b.p. tum quem ex familia); sixthly to the patron or patroness, their children and parents (b.p. unde patronus, patrona, liberi et parentes eorum) . . . eighthly, to the cognates of the manumissor.

5. The succession unde decem personae we have shown to be superfluous, for our constitution,<sup>52</sup> which we have made about the emancipation of children, directs that manumitting parents shall have the privilege of succession formerly secured to them by a fiduciary contract, so that this bonorum possessio is no longer required. 6(5). As to the b.p. tum quem ex familia and the b.p. unde patronus et patrona, etc., these have been entirely removed by our constitution relating to the right of patronage, for we have put the succession to freedmen on the same footing as the succession to ingenui, with this difference only that the succession of freedmen does not go beyond the fifth degree.<sup>53</sup> Consequently the usual bonorum possessions meet all their needs. 7(6). The eighth bonorum possessio viz. unde cognati manumissoris has also been abolished for the reasons above stated.

### XVIII. OTHER CASES OF UNIVERSAL SUCCESSION

388. Inheritance and bonorum possessio are not the only modes of universal succession. Gaius mentions, besides, emptio bonorum, adrogation and conventio in manum.<sup>54</sup> Of these Justinian describes adrogation alone, but he adds another case, namely when a deceased person's estate is assigned to a person who is not an heir for the purpose of securing the liberty of slaves manumitted by will or codicil, and mentions as obsolete emptio bonorum and succession under the senatusconsultum Claudianum.<sup>55</sup> Emptio bonorum was a method of execution on property or a procedure in insolvency to be described when we come to speak of the Law of Actions (§ 736). Adrogation and the consequences of marriage in manum have received attention under the head of the Law of Persons. The other topics are explained in the text. We need not therefore give further attention to any of these modes of universal succession and may proceed at once to the subject of Obligations.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III (TITLES X—XII)

#### TITLE X

#### *Of acquisition by adrogation*

There is another kind of universal succession created not by the Law of the Twelve Tables or by the praetor's edict but by the law which rests upon consent.

<sup>52</sup> Cod. 8. 48 (49) 6.

<sup>53</sup> Cod. 6. 4. 4.

<sup>54</sup> G. 2. 98.

<sup>55</sup> Inst. 2. 9. 6; 3. 11; 3. 12.

G 3. 83.

1. This takes place when a paterfamilias gives himself in adoption. Formerly all his property corporeal and incorporeal and debts due to him vested in the adrogator by full legal title except such things as are destroyed by capitis deminutio such as are the obligation of freedmen to render services<sup>56</sup> and rights derived from agnation. The same formerly applied to use and usufruct, but our constitution<sup>57</sup> provides that they are not to be destroyed by the lowest degree of capitis deminutio (c.d. minima).

2. But by our law the adrogator is placed in the same position as the natural parent; for today the father, whether natural or adoptive, acquires through his sons merely the usufruct of what comes to them from outside, the sons themselves retaining the ownership.<sup>58</sup> But if the adrogated son dies in the adoptive family, the ownership too passes to the adrogator, unless there are other persons who by our constitution are preferred to the father in respect of such acquisitions of the son as do not vest immediately in the father.<sup>59</sup>

3. Debts owed by the adrogatus do not in strict law bind the adrogator, but the adrogator may be sued in the name of the son, and if he is unwilling to undertake his defence creditors may go to the competent magistrate and get an order allowing them to take possession and dispose in the manner prescribed by law of the property which together with the usufruct in it would have belonged to the son if he had not given himself in adoption.

## TITLE XI

*Of person: to whom an estate is assigned to preserve gifts of freedom.*

Another case of succession was created by a constitution of the Emperor Marcus, which allows slaves, who have been manumitted by testament, if no one accepts the inheritance, to ask for the property of the deceased to be assigned to them in order that gifts of freedom may take effect. This is contained in a rescript of the Emperor addressed to Popilius Rufus, which runs as follows:—

1. "If the estate of Virginius Valens, who has made certain gifts of freedom in his will, is in the way of being sold as insolvent, there being no successor *ab intestato*, the magistrate who has cognizance of the matter, will on application give effect to your desire to have the estate assigned to you for the preservation of the gifts of freedom whether direct or fideicommissary, if you give the creditors adequate security for the discharge of their claims in full. The slaves to whom a direct gift of freedom is made will be free in the same way as if the inheritance had been taken up, and those whom the heir was requested to manumit will receive their freedom from you, unless you are unwilling to have the estate assigned to you except on the terms that the slaves also directly manumitted shall be your freed-

<sup>56</sup> By *jurata promissio operarum* (§ 429) or stipulation Buckl. T. p. 458

<sup>57</sup> Cod. 3. 33. 16.

<sup>58</sup> Cod. 6. 61. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Cod. 6. 59. 11, i.e., not falling under the description of *peculium profectitium*. The father was postponed to children and brothers and sisters of the deceased filius. Moyle, *ad Inst.* 3. 1. 15.

men. We approve this too if the individuals concerned consent. This our rescript is not to be rendered inoperative by any claims of the fiscus, for the cause of freedom is to be preferred to any considerations of pecuniary advantage; and if the estate is sequestrated, it must be done without prejudice to gifts of liberty which would have taken effect if the testamentary heir had accepted the inheritance." 2. This rescript comes to the aid both of manumitted slaves and of deceased persons to prevent their goods being possessed and sold by their creditors. Certainly, if goods are assigned for this cause, there will not be any sale in insolvency; for the deceased has some one to take up his cause, and well qualified too, for he gives the creditors security to answer their claims in full. 3. Primarily this rescript applies when freedom is given by testament. What is to be said if a person dying intestate has given freedom to slaves by codicil, and no one takes up the succession *ab intestato*? The boon of the constitution should be extended to this case. Undoubtedly it applies when a testator has given freedom by codicil. 4. The constitution, as its words import, applies only when there is no successor *ab intestato*. Accordingly, so long as it is uncertain whether there is any such heir, the constitution remains in suspense. So soon as it is certain that no one is going to take up the inheritance, the constitution applies. 5. Suppose a person has abstained from the inheritance, but in circumstances which entitle him to claim *restitutio in integrum*. Does the constitution take effect? Yes, the estate must be assigned. What then if the heir subsequently gets restitution? Of course freedom once bestowed cannot be recalled. 6. This constitution was introduced to preserve bequests of freedom; if then there are none such, it does not apply. What then if the deceased made gifts of freedom in his lifetime or *mortis causa* and the slaves so manumitted wish to have the estate assigned to them to prevent any question being raised of manumission in fraud of creditors? Can this be allowed? The better view is that it can, though the constitution does not say so. 7. The constitution of the Emperor Marcus is in many respects incomplete. Accordingly we have dealt with the whole matter in the fullest detail in our own constitution<sup>60</sup> to which reference may be made.

## TITLE XII

*Of successions now obsolete, namely, by Sale of Goods and under the senatusconsultum Claudianum*

There were formerly other forms of universal succession, which existed before the succession last described. Such was the purchase of goods, a complicated process of selling a debtor's estate, which was in use in the days of the ordinary procedure. But when the extraordinary procedure became general, the system of *bonorum venditio* passed out of use along with the ordinary procedure; and now creditors are allowed by order of the magistrate to possess the insolvent debtor's goods and dispose of them as they consider to be for their advantage, as will appear more fully from the treatment of the subject in the Digest. 2. There used also to be a deplorable case of universal acquisition under the *senatusconsultum Claudianum* when a free-woman by cohabiting with a slave lost her freedom and with it her substance. We have thought this unworthy of our age § 61 and have not allowed it to be inserted in our Digest.

<sup>60</sup> Cod. 7. 2. 15.

## BOOK IV

## THE LAW OF OBLIGATIONS

## I. OBLIGATIONS IN GENERAL

389. Obligation is defined in the Institutes as *juris vinculum quo necessitate adstringimur alicujus solvendae rei* 8. 13 pr. *secundum nostrae civitatis jura*—"a legal bond whereby we are constrained by a necessity of performing something according to the laws of our country". The word *vinculum* like the word *obligatio* suggests a physical constraint. *Vinculum* means a fetter, *obligatio* means a tying or binding. It is surmised that in the most primitive phase of Roman Law the fetter and the binding had a sinister reality. A person was said to be bound, who had pledged his body by the solemn process of *nexum* (§ 507) as security for the payment of a debt, just as a thing was said to be bound when it was given in pledge for the same purpose.<sup>1</sup> But by the classical period of Roman Law, still more in the age of Justinian, all this had faded into a remote background. It cannot be supposed that it was present to the mind of the author (whoever he was) from whom Justinian borrowed his definition. For him the words *vinculum* and *obligatio* were metaphors, just as we use the language of metaphor when we speak of "bonds of affection", or say that a man is "bound" to act or to forbear. Obligation had come to mean, as in the above definition, a duty of performance or abstention imposed by law. Sometimes it meant the corresponding right of the person entitled, as in the phrase "to acquire an obligation". Lastly, by a slight extension, rather implied than expressed in the texts of the Roman Law, obligation is the relation which exists between two persons, one of whom is bound to act or to forbear for the benefit of the other, a relation of creditor and debtor.<sup>2</sup> The first is the person who has the right, the second is the person who owes the corresponding duty. This is the sense in which the word obligation, when used precisely, is understood at the present day.

390. Obligation is a *res incorporalis* and as such belongs 1. 2. 2 to the *jus rerum* or Law of Things. But it creates a *jus in personam*, *i.e.* a right available against a specific person,

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<sup>1</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 407

<sup>2</sup> Moyle, p. 476.

not a *jus in rem*, *i.e.* a right available against persons generally, or, as it is sometimes expressed, against the whole world. This distinction is emphasised by Paulus in a well-known passage. *Obligationum substantia non in eo consistit ut aliquod corpus nostrum vel servitutem nostram faciat, sed ut alium nobis obstringat ad dandum aliquid vel faciendum vel praestandum.*<sup>3</sup> "The essence of obligation does not consist in making us owner of a thing or entitling us to a servitude, but in binding a person to us to give something, or to do, or to make good." This essential difference is somewhat obscured by the Roman inclusion of obligation under the general head of the Law relating to Things. It is true that an obligation commonly has some value for the person entitled and, so far, forms part of his estate. But there is a very substantial difference between having five pounds in your own pocket, and having a claim to get five pounds out of someone else's pocket. The French Code, strangely, includes the whole topic of Obligations in Book III, which treats of "The different ways in which property is acquired". But more recent codes assign to the subject a place commensurate with its importance in the modern law, and make it, along with the Law of Property, of Family Relations and of Succession, one of the principal divisions of the Private Law.

391. Justinian's definition of obligation is in terms very wide. It seems to embrace all rights in *personam*. But by Roman usage it included only rights in *personam* capable of estimation in money or (in other words) "pertaining to the sphere of proprietary rights".<sup>4</sup> It did not include rights arising out of family relations, or rights created by public law.<sup>5</sup> In Gaius the term is limited to rights and duties recognised by the *jus civile*. In Justinian it includes some, but not all, praetorian rights and duties.<sup>6</sup> Whether a right is or is not regarded as a source of obligation seems to be a question of usage rather than of definition. Thus the *obligationes quasi ex maleficio* (§§ 392, 617) are all praetorian, but the praetorian liability of the master or father in the *actiones adjecticiae qualitatis* (§ 547) is not represented as an obligation. It is reserved in the Institutes for Book IV, which treats of the Law of Actions.

392. CLASSIFICATION OF OBLIGATIONS. — Obligations are <sup>3. 13. 1.</sup> variously classified:—(a) Civil and praetorian or honorary.

<sup>3</sup> Dig. 44. 7. 3 pr.

<sup>4</sup> Salmond, *Jurisprudence*, p. 630.

<sup>5</sup> Sohm, translated by Ledlie, p. 358.

<sup>6</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 248.



This classification is peculiar to Roman Law. It distinguishes obligations according as they derive their authority from the civil law or from the praetor's Edict. Though Justinian describes this as "the principal division of obligations", he makes no further use of it.

3. 13. 2. (b) Ex contractu, quasi ex contractu, ex delicto (or maleficio) quasi ex delicto (or maleficio)—arising from agreement, based upon the analogy of agreement, arising from delict, based upon the analogy of delict. This four-fold classification is adopted in the Institutes and was anticipated by Gaius (if he was the author)<sup>7</sup> in the third book of the *Aurea*, as appears from a passage cited in the Digest.<sup>8</sup> In his Institutes he speaks of obligations as having two sources only, viz. contract and delict,<sup>9</sup> while in the second book of the *Aurea* he makes a three-fold division, "Obligations arise from contract or from delict or by special rules of law from various types of cause".<sup>10</sup> Justinian's classification is open to objection, first because the group of obligations described as arising quasi ex contractu seems to resemble obligations arising from contract merely in having the negative character of not arising from delict; secondly, because the distinction between obligationes ex maleficio and obligationes quasi ex maleficio has no logical foundation. On the other hand, the two-fold division leaves many obligations unaccounted for. The three-fold classification has practical utility, if no scientific value. Obligations arise from agreement, or from wrongdoing, or from various other causes, which cannot conveniently be brought under any more precise description.
3. 27 pr. (c) Civil—natural. A civil obligation is one which is fully protected by law and enforceable by action. A natural obligation is one which is only imperfectly protected by law. It is not enforceable by action, but has legal consequences, which vary with the circumstances.<sup>11</sup> Thus, a natural obligation may support a contract of suretyship (§ 557) or be converted into a civil obligation by novation (§ 645), at least in certain cases. It seems that the only consequence which is common to all cases of natural obligation is the exclusion of the *condictio indebiti*, for, where there is a natural obligation to pay, a payment which discharges it cannot be described as undue.<sup>12</sup> Natural obligations resulted from the contracts of slaves and from contracts between a *paterfamilias* and a *filiusfamilias*, or

<sup>7</sup> *Supra*, § 36.

<sup>8</sup> Dig. 44. 7. 5.

<sup>9</sup> G. 3. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Dig. 44. 7. 1 pr.

<sup>11</sup> Moyle, p. 480.

<sup>12</sup> Dig. 12. 6. 38, 1 & 2; 40 pr.; 44. 7. 10; 46. 1. 16, 4.

between persons subject to the same potestas. These cases are peculiar to Roman Law. Other cases of natural obligation have their counterpart in modern systems. Such is the case of the contract of an impubes made without his tutor's authority, and, in the later law, of a minor made without the consent of his curator. It was formerly thought that a nude pact, *i.e.*, an agreement which did not fall within the scope of any recognised class of contract or actionable pact (§ 511) produced a natural obligation. But the better opinion is that this was not so, except in the case of an agreement to pay interest on a money loan (§ 407).<sup>13</sup>

## II. OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM CONTRACT

393. The texts of the Roman Law do not supply a definition of contract. The words *contractus*—*contrahere*—like “contract” in English, are used in various senses, sometimes wider, sometimes narrower. *Labeo* gives *contractus* the meaning of a reciprocal obligation, such as purchase and sale, hire, partnership.<sup>14</sup> But when the Romans speak of obligations arising from contract, they mean obligations arising from convention or agreement. In Roman Law it was far from being the case that all agreements which might be expected to produce a legal obligation did so. Agreements were not (subject to later developments) actionable unless they could be referred to one or other of four categories, and it was only then that they were said to give rise to obligations from contract. Corresponding with these four categories, obligations arising from contract are subdivided into four classes which are distinguished as obligations:—(a) *re*—*i.e.* by the handing over of a thing (*res*); (b) *verbis*, *i.e.* by a form of words; (c) *litteris*, *i.e.* by a special kind of writing; (d) *consensu*, *i.e.* by agreement without anything further. The last class was limited to four specific cases. This classification, it will be observed, is a classification not of contracts, but of obligations. But it is commonly applied to the agreements from which the obligations arise. We distinguish, therefore, the contracts known to Roman Law as Real, Verbal, Litteral and Consensual. These several classes of contract will be considered in this order. But, first, mention must be made of some other principles of classification and of general standards of liability.

394. Contracts are unilateral or bilateral. A unilateral contract is one in which the duty of performance is all on one

<sup>13</sup> *Girard* (8), p. 682; *Moyle*, p. 479; *Buckl. M.* p. 336.

<sup>14</sup> *Dig.* 50. 16. 19.

side; thus in a loan of money the borrower alone is bound. In bilateral contracts there are reciprocal obligations. These again are subdivided. In some a duty exists on both sides from the moment of the conclusion of the contract; thus in sale the seller is bound to deliver, the buyer is bound to pay. They are said to be perfectly bilateral. In others there is an immediate duty on one side only, but on the other a contingent duty; thus, in deposit, the depositary is bound to restore the thing deposited, the depositor is bound, but only if circumstances call for it, to compensate the depositary for expenses. Such contracts are said to be imperfectly bilateral. Sometimes instead of "bilateral" we say "synallagmatic", a word derived from the Greek word for reciprocal contracts.

395. Contracts are *stricti juris* or *bonae fidei*. This classification properly applies to actions (*stricti juris judicia*—*bonae fidei judicia*), but usage permits its extension to the corresponding contracts.<sup>15</sup> All unilateral contracts are *stricti juris*. They bind the promisor to the very thing he has promised, neither more nor less. If action is brought upon them, equitable defences must be raised by way of plea (*exceptio*). All bilateral contracts are *bonae fidei*. Under the formulary procedure it was an instruction to the *iudex* to decide according to good faith (§ 714); this empowered him to take into consideration equitable defences though not raised on the pleadings, and allowed him a greater latitude of interpretation and of decision, so as to do substantial justice between the parties. This distinction survived the formulary procedure and persisted in the later law.

396. Contracts are formal or informal. A contract is formal when the form makes the contract. An informal contract depends upon the intention of the parties. This distinction is not made by the Roman lawyers but is implicit in any legal system. Thus in Roman Law *stipulatio* (§ 430) and *expensilatio* (§ 441) are formal; the contract of sale is informal. In English law the contract under seal is (or was) formal.

397. Formal contracts are sometimes called abstract, because they are dissociated from events outside themselves. They are self-contained. The stipulation, as will be seen, consists in question and answer: "Do you promise to give?" "I promise". Why? The inquiry is irrelevant. I am bound because I have promised. In informal contracts the why is relevant. For this reason they are also called "causal" contracts.

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<sup>15</sup> The phrase *bonae fidei contractus* occurs. Dig. 22. 1. 32, 2.

398. In course of time abstract contracts tend to become causal. An important movement in this direction took place when Aquilius Gallus, Cicero's colleague in the praetorship (B.C. 66) introduced into his Edict the *exceptio doli*.<sup>16</sup> After this it was possible, as it had not been before, to go outside a formal contract and to inquire into the circumstances in which it was made. Thus, if a defendant alleged that he had been induced by plaintiff's fraud to bind himself by a formal contract, he could raise this issue by pleading the *exceptio doli*. In English law the contract under seal has undergone the same development. "It is only in modern times that special defences, on the ground of fraud and the like, have been allowed to avail a man against his own deed."<sup>17</sup>

399. It must be remarked that a contract is not necessarily formal in the sense of the above description because the law prescribes a particular form. Thus Justinian under penalty of nullity required certain formalities for contracts which the parties had agreed to reduce to writing,<sup>18</sup> and by English law, equally under penalty of nullity, contracts of marine insurance must be executed in the form of a policy.<sup>19</sup> But in neither case is the contract a formal contract in the technical sense; still less if the writing is not of the essence of the contract, but only needed for proof of its existence and terms.<sup>20</sup>

400. **DOLUS—CULPA.** Every party to a contract, whatever the nature of his undertaking, is required to come up to a certain standard of conduct, which varies with the circumstances, and determines the general measure of his responsibility. Everyone is answerable for intentionally wrongful acts, that is to say for *dolus*. An agreement not to be answerable for *dolus* is without effect.<sup>21</sup>

401. But, generally, something more is required, *viz.* a certain measure of diligence. In principle the party who benefits by the contract incurs the higher liability. Thus less is required of the lender than of the borrower, less of the depositary than of the depositor. When the contract is for the benefit of both parties, each is required to exhibit the same degree of diligence.<sup>21a</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Hunter, p. 595. But see p. 438, n. 58.

<sup>17</sup> Pollock, *Principles of Contract* (10), p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Non aliter vires habere sancimus.* Cod. 4. 21. 17. The rule was general, not limited to contracts of sale, in connection with which it is mentioned in the Institutes (*infra*, § 449).

<sup>19</sup> Stamp Act, 1891, s. 93.

<sup>20</sup> *E.g.*, Sale of Goods Act, 1893, s. 4; Law of Property Act, 1925, s. 40.

<sup>21</sup> Dig. 2. 14. 27, 3; 50. 17. 23

<sup>21a</sup> Dig. 13. 6. 5. 2 *in fine*.

402. Diligence is the duty seen from the positive side. If a person fails to exhibit in his conduct the required measure of diligence, he is guilty of *negligentia* or *culpa*. To say that a person is liable for *culpa* is another way of saying that he must exhibit diligence.

403. The texts distinguish two standards of diligence, a higher and a lower. The higher is the diligence which the good father of a family habitually exhibits in his own affairs (*diligentia exacta* or *exactissima*—*diligentia boni patris-familias*).<sup>22</sup> The lower is the diligence which the person in question exhibits in his own affairs (*diligentia quam suis rebus*).<sup>23</sup> This may, in fact, reach a high degree of diligence or it may not. But, at least, where this standard is applied nothing extraordinary is expected. It is a concrete standard. It is enough that the person in question pursues his normal course. He need not concern himself with ideals. According to a traditional terminology, where the first standard is applied, there is said to be liability for *culpa levis in abstracto*—slight negligence in the abstract; in the second case there is liability for *culpa levis in concreto*—slight negligence in the concrete. The only reason for introducing the word *levis* into the description is to indicate that the liability goes beyond liability for gross negligence (*culpa lata*) which, we are told, is scarcely, if at all, distinguishable from wrongful purpose. "*Lata culpa* is extreme negligence, that is not understanding what everybody understands."<sup>24</sup> It is a degree of negligence which indicates a complete obtuseness of mind and conduct: "for, if a man does not come up to the standard of diligence which human nature demands of him he is not free from guilt", says Celsus; with the qualification (evidently an intrusive gloss), "unless (in the case of deposit) he comes up to his own standard",<sup>25</sup> a qualification scarcely admissible if *culpa lata* is equivalent to *dolus*.

404. It must be said that the two degrees of *culpa* are generally thought to be of post-classical origin. Modestinus in an extract cited in the *Collatio* (§ 39) is unaware of them.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the classical law had a standard of liability which has almost disappeared from the later law. In some cases there was an absolute liability for all loss not attributable to *vis major*. The party to the contract had to keep the thing safe. He was said to be liable for *custodia*.

<sup>22</sup> Dig. 13. 6. 18 pr.; 13. 7. 14

<sup>23</sup> Dig. 10. 2. 25. 16.

<sup>24</sup> Dig. 50. 16. 213. 2

<sup>25</sup> Dig. 16. 3. 32.

<sup>26</sup> *Coll.* 10. 2. 1

Here, there was no question of negligence, except so far as it might negative the defence of *vis major*, and no degree of diligence saved the party from liability. In Justinian's system the duty of *custodia* was usually reduced to the duty of exact diligence. It remained in the liability of innkeepers, shippers and stable-keepers under the praetorian Edict (§ 513). The difference between *custodia* and *exacta diligentia* is seen particularly in the case of theft. In the first case the liability to make good the loss is absolute apart from *vis major* (§ 488), which includes violence offered by pirates and robbers, but not ordinary theft; in the second case there is no absolute liability, but "an obligation to show the care of a *bonus paterfamilias* in guarding against theft", the burden of proving diligence being as usual upon the person responsible.<sup>27</sup>

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III

#### TITLE XIII

##### *Of obligations*

Let us now pass to obligations. Obligation is a legal bond whereby we are constrained by a necessity of performing something according to the laws of our country. 1. The principal division of obligations is into civil and praetorian. Civil obligations are created by statutes or, at least, approved by the civil law. Praetorian obligations are those which the praetor has created in the exercise of his jurisdiction. They are also called honorary. 2. The next division of obligations is into four species. For they arise either from contract, or on the analogy of contract, or from delict or on the analogy of delict. We shall first examine those which arise from contract, which, again, are of four kinds. For they are contracted *re* or *verbis* or *litteris* or *consensu*; all of which we proceed to examine in order.

### III. REAL CONTRACTS

405. This group includes four particular contracts, *viz.* 1, *mutuum*—loan for consumption; 2, *commodatum*—loan for use; 3, *depositum*—deposit; 4, *pignus*—pledge or pawn.

The common elements are:—(a) agreement, (b) the handing over by one person to another of a *res*. In the first case the ownership of the thing transferred passes to the transferee, in the other cases it does not.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Buckl. *T.* 560, *M.* 340. The whole question of *custodia* is obscure. Very different views are held.

<sup>28</sup> For the historical origin of these contracts. see Buckl. *T.* p. 462 ff.; *M.* p. 272.

3. 14 pr. 406. **MUTUUM.**—This is a loan for consumption of money or of other things which are weighed, numbered or measured (*res fungibiles*). The effect of the contract is to vest the ownership of the thing transferred in the transferee, and, normally, the lender must be owner of the thing lent, and competent to alienate. But commercial dealings do not always conform to this requirement. If A owes me money, and I direct him to make payment for my account to B, who is to have the money on loan, I am lender, but I have never been owner of the coins lent. The contract of *mutuum* is unilateral, *i.e.* it gives rise to a duty on one side only, *viz.* the duty of the transferee (borrower) to make over to the transferor (lender) at the time expressly or impliedly agreed, or at a reasonable time after demand, other money or goods equal in quantity and quality. He cannot escape doing so on the ground that the subject of the loan has perished by accident, as by fire or shipwreck. The duty of the borrower was enforced by an action called *condictio*, which in the case of a money-loan was known as *actio certae pecuniae creditae* or *condictio certae pecuniae* (§ 711), and in the case of any other fungible thing as *condictio triticaria* (§ 712), from *triticum*=grain, a loan of corn being taken as typical of all loans other than a loan of money. The procedure in the case of money-loan was marked by the peculiarity that the plaintiff might challenge the defendant to a wager of one third of the amount in suit, with the result that if judgment went against him the defendant had to pay the amount of the loan and one third more. Conversely, if the plaintiff failed in his action he had to pay one third to the defendant. This was effected by reciprocal stipulations known as *sponsio et restipulatio tertiae partis*.
3. 14. 2.

407. Interest on money lent. The parties might agree that the loan was to bear interest (*faenus*—*usurae*), but this was not binding as a contract (with some exceptions) unless expressed in the form of a stipulation (*stipulatio usurarum*), and consequently it was usual to reduce any loan at interest to the form of a verbal contract by which the borrower bound himself to repay the capital and to pay the agreed rate of interest (*stipulatio sortis et usurarum*). In general, a bare agreement for interest was not actionable, but created a natural obligation, which excluded the *condictio indebiti* (§ 392). The principal exception was the case of money lent to be carried over sea, or to be converted into goods to be carried over sea, at the risk of the lender (*pecunia trajecticia*). This was known as *nauticum faenus*. There were some other exceptions,

*viz.* loans by cities (in the classical law), loans of grain (Alexander Severus), loans by bankers (Justinian).<sup>29</sup>

408. Rate of interest. The permitted rate of interest was variously defined at different periods. The Twelve Tables are thought to have fixed it at one twelfth of the capital *per month* (*unciarium faenus*), which means that the debt had doubled itself at the end of the year. A *lex Genucia* of B.C. 342 is said to have prohibited interest altogether, but had no lasting effect. In the time of Cicero the highest permitted rate was 1 *p.c. per month* or 12 *p.c. per annum* (*usuræ centesimæ seu calendariæ*—so-called because the interest fell due on the first day of the month—*kalendæ*). This remained substantially unchanged until Justinian made the rate vary with the circumstances, the standard rate being 6 *p.c.* In the contract of *nauticum faenus*, in which the lender lost his money if the ship did not reach its destination, the parties had been free to fix their own rate of interest<sup>30</sup>; Justinian limited it to 12 *p.c. per annum*.

409. Accumulation of interest. In the classical period arrears of interest might not be recovered in any one action in excess of the capital. Justinian enacted that the capital might not in any circumstances yield in interest a sum greater than itself. This meant that when the capital had doubled it ceased to bear interest.<sup>31</sup>

410. Compound interest (*anatocismus*). Before Justinian the law forbade the parties to agree in advance that the loan should bear compound interest.<sup>32</sup> Justinian (very absurdly) forbade it as regards accrued interest as well; that is to say, the parties were not allowed to convert accrued interest into an interest-bearing loan by a new agreement.<sup>33</sup>

4. 7. 7.

411. *SENATUSCONSULTUM MACEDONIANUM*. This measure, enacted in the reign of Vespasian (A.D. 69–79), forbade loans of money to sons in power,<sup>34</sup> so that a lender could not recover the loan even after the father's death. But *senatusconsulta* still took effect as instructions to the magistrates, and not precisely as legislation (§ 8). Consequently the transaction

<sup>29</sup> Dig. 22. 1. 30; Cod. 4. 32. 11 (12); Nov. 136, c. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 2. 14. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Girard, p. 549.

<sup>32</sup> This, perhaps, may be inferred from Cod. 4. 32. 28 pr. There is much uncertainty as to the classical law. Cicero, when governor of Cilicia (B.C. 50), allowed compound interest calculated on annual (not monthly) accruals. Apparently, it had been forbidden by a recent *senatusconsultum*. Cic. *Epp. ad Attic.* 5. 21, 11 and 13.

<sup>33</sup> Girard, p. 550.

<sup>34</sup> Dig. 14. 6. 1 pr. Son was taken to include grandson. Dig. 14. 6. 14 and (later) female descendants in power were brought within the scope of the S.C. (Inst. 4. 7. 7).



remained technically valid. If a son borrowed money he was still liable *jure civili* and the father was liable *jure praetorio* to the extent of the son's *peculium* in the *actio de peculio* (§ 549). But the praetor gave effect to the *senatusconsultum* by allowing either son or father a plea known as the *exceptio senatusconsulti Macedoniani* (§ 726).

412. However, there were cases in which the exception was not available: *viz.* 1. if the son was generally supposed to be *sui juris*, or had given himself out as such; 2. if the father had consented to the loan or subsequently ratified it, or been enriched by it; 3. if the son had a *peculium* of his own (*castrense* or *quasi-castrense*), and the loan was covered by it; 4. if the son had renounced the benefit of the exception after becoming *sui juris*; 5. if, being away from home for the prosecution of his studies, he had borrowed a moderate sum, not in excess of his usual allowance. Even apart from these exceptions the loan produced a natural obligation, so that, once repaid, it could not be recovered by the *condictio indebiti*.

413. OTHER CONTRACTS RE.—*Commodatum*—*depositum*—*pignus*. These have certain common characteristics:—

1. They are all real contracts created by the transfer of a *res*, and consequent displacement, not as in *mutuum* of ownership, but of detention (*commodatum*—*depositum*) or of possession (*pignus*) (§§ 253, 255).

2. They are all *bonae fidei* contracts, imperfectly bilateral, giving rise to a direct action on the one side, to a contrary action on the other.

3 14. 2

414. *COMMODATUM*.—This was a gratuitous loan for use of movables, or, more rarely, of immovables. It might even relate to fungible things if they were to be returned in specie, as when I lend you goods to dress your shop window.<sup>35</sup> The lender is termed the *commodans*—*commodator*; the borrower is termed the *commodatarius*.

415. The duties of the borrower were:—

1. to return the thing lent at the time or in the event agreed or implied in the contract;

2. to return it as good as he received it, reasonable wear and tear excepted;

3. to exercise the highest degree of diligence (*exacta diligentia*). He was liable, therefore, for *dolus* and for *culpa levis in abstracto* (§ 408). He was not liable (subject to 4) if the thing perished from a cause entirely outside his control

<sup>35</sup> Dig. 13. 6. 3. 6.

(casus). He was answerable for theft unless he could show that he was free from fault <sup>36</sup>;

4. not to use the thing except in terms of the contract. If he used the thing in an unauthorised way he was liable also for casus; and, if he did so in bad faith, for theft. 4. 1. 6.

416. The duties of the lender were:—

1. to allow the borrower to use the thing for the time agreed or reasonable in the circumstances <sup>37</sup>;

2. to indemnify him for extraordinary expenses. Thus heavy expense incurred in medical treatment of a sick slave, or in pursuing and bringing back a runaway was charged to the lender; but the ordinary costs of food and medicine fell on the borrower <sup>38</sup>;

3. to indemnify him for damage caused by the thing lent owing to some defect or mischievous quality of which the lender was aware, *e.g.* if vessels were lent to hold wine or oil, which the lender knew to be leaky or otherwise defective. <sup>39</sup>

Since the contract is (normally) for the advantage of the borrower alone the lender's liability is less extensive.

417. Actions. The lender had the *actio commodati directa* to enforce the duties of the borrower; the borrower had the *actio commodati contraria* to enforce the duties of the lender. We learn from Gaius that there were alternative formulae in this action—in *factum concepta* and in *jus concepta* (§§ 716, 717). The formula in *factum* was the earlier. <sup>40</sup> G. 4. 47

418. *DEPOSITUM*.—This is a contract whereby one person (depositor) gives to another (*depositarius*) a thing to be kept for him gratuitously and returned on demand. 3. 14. 3

419. The duties of the *depositarius* were:—

1. to keep the thing—not to use it. If he used it in bad faith he was guilty of theft; 4. 1. 6.

2. to restore it on demand as good as he received it with any produce or accessories. <sup>41</sup> According to the Institutes and texts in the Digest <sup>42</sup> the *depositarius* was liable for *dolus*, not for *culpa*. He was also liable for *culpa lata* (scarcely to be distinguished from *dolus*). One interpolated text in the Digest seems to make him liable for so-called *culpa levis in concreto*. <sup>43</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Dig. 13. 6. 21; 18. 1. 35. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Dig. 13. 6. 17. 3

<sup>38</sup> Dig. 13. 6. 18. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Dig. 13. 6. 18. 3

<sup>40</sup> Buckl. *M.* pp. 274, 276

<sup>41</sup> Dig. 16. 3. 1, 16 and 21.

<sup>42</sup> Dig. 13. 6. 5. 2; 16. 3. 1. 47

<sup>43</sup> Dig. 16. 3. 32

420. The duties of the depositor were:—

1. to compensate the depositary for all expenses;
2. to indemnify him for all damage attributable to the *dolus* or any *culpa* of the depositor; e.g. if he deposited a slave whom he knew or should have known to be given to stealing.<sup>44</sup>

421. Actions. The depositor had the *actio depositi directa*, the depositary the *actio depositi contraria*. As in the case of *commodatum* there were alternative formulae. The direct action had certain peculiarities:—

- G. 4. 47.  
4. 16. 2.
1. Condemnation involved *infamia*;
  2. No set-off, deduction, *exceptio doli* or right of retention was permitted as an excuse for not restoring the property on demand.<sup>44a</sup>

422. Special cases of *depositum*.

(a) *Depositum necessarium* or *miserabile*. This was a deposit made upon occasion of civil disturbance, fire, earthquake or shipwreck. It gave rise to a claim for double damages, if the property was not returned on demand.

4. 6. 17

(b) *Depositum sequestre*, giving rise to a special action called *actio depositi sequestraria*. This was a deposit made by two or more persons of a movable or immovable thing, particularly of a thing in litigation (*res litigiosa*) with a third party called a sequester, on the terms that it was to be delivered to one or other of them in a certain event, particularly in the event of the decision of the litigation. Unlike an ordinary deposit this type of deposit conferred juristic possession, not detention merely, upon the depositary.<sup>45</sup> The object of this was to prevent *usucapion* running in favour of one of the parties pending the decision of the event.

(c) *Depositum irregulare*. This was a deposit subject to a condition of restitution in *genere* and not in *specie*.<sup>46</sup> It took place when money was placed in the hands of a banker or other person, on the understanding that the amount, not the actual coins, should be returned on demand. This contract resembled *mutuum*, but its economic purpose was different, because it was a deposit made with a capitalist, not a loan made by a capitalist,<sup>47</sup> and its legal effect was different. It was *bonae fidei*, not *stricti iuris*. It might give rise to *infamia*. The *senatusconsultum Macedonianum* did not apply. Interest might be claimed under a simple pact, or in case of *mora*.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 62 (61), 5 *in fine*

<sup>44a</sup> Inst. 4. 6. 30; Cod. 4. 34. 11 pr.

<sup>45</sup> Dig. 16. 3. 17, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 31.

<sup>47</sup> Girard, p. 565.

<sup>48</sup> Dig. 16. 3. 25, 1. In *bonae fidei contractibus ex mora usurae debentur*, Dig. 22. 1. 32, 2. *Mora* means wilful delay in discharging an obligation.

It may be remarked that in English and South African Law a deposit with a banker is regarded as a loan.

423. **PIGNUS** (Pawn or Pledge).—This was one of the modes of creating a real security for a debt, differing from *mancipatio cum fiducia* because it did not involve transfer of ownership, and from *hypotheca* because it did involve transfer of possession. But this is a topic belonging to the Law of Property (§ 244). Here we are concerned with *pignus* as a contract. It may be defined as a contract whereby a corporeal thing is handed over by one person to another as security for a debt. 3 14. 4.

424. The duties of the pledgee (creditor) were:—

1. to restore the thing when the debt was extinguished;
2. if the property was sold, to restore the surplus, if any, after satisfying the debt;
3. to exercise *exacta diligentia*. Thus, he must realise the fruits of the property (if there be any) and set them off, first, against interest; then, against capital, unless it was agreed that he was to keep the fruits in lieu of interest (*pactum antichreseos*);

4. in the case of an ordinary pledge of a movable not to use the thing unless expressly authorised by the contract. If he did so in bad faith, he was guilty of theft. 4. 1. 6.

425. The duties of the pledgor (debtor) were:—

1. to pay necessary and (within reasonable limits) useful expenses, incurred by the creditor about the thing pledged, *e.g.* repairing a house or medical attendance on a slave<sup>49</sup>;

2. to indemnify the creditor for damage or mischief caused by the thing pledged, if he knew or ought to have known of its harmful or mischievous quality. The standard of diligence—the contract being for the benefit of both parties—is the same as that required of the creditor, *viz.* *exacta diligentia*. Thus, the pledgor was answerable, if he knowingly or carelessly pledged a slave who was given to stealing. If he was without fault in the matter, he had the alternative of noxal surrender<sup>50</sup> (§ 621); 3. 14. 4.

3. to pay damages, if he had pledged a thing which did not belong to him and the creditor had in consequence lost the benefit of his security.<sup>51</sup>

426. **Actions.** The pledgor had the *actio pigneraticia directa* to enforce the duties of the pledgee, particularly the duty of restoring the property, when the debt was extinguished. The pledgee had the *actio pigneraticia contraria*. The real actions and interdicts arising out of *pignus* have been described above (§ 247).

<sup>49</sup> Dig. 13. 7. 8 pr. and 25.

<sup>50</sup> Dig. 13. 7. 31; 47. 2. 62, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Dig. 13. 7. 9 pr.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK III

## TITLE XIV

*How an obligation is contracted re*

§ 406.

An example of an obligation contracted *re* is the giving of a *mutuum*. The obligation of *mutuum* consists in things which are weighed, counted or measured, such as wine, oil, grain, coined money, bronze, silver, gold, things which by counting, weighing or numbering we give to a person with the intention of making them his, and on the understanding that not the same things, but others of like kind and quality shall some time be given back. The transaction is called *mutuum*, because from being mine the thing becomes yours (*ex meo tuum fit*). It gives rise to an action called a *condictio*. 1. If a person has received what was not due from another who pays him in error, he is bound *re*, and the other may bring a *condictio* to recover what he has paid, for he can make use of the formula, "if it appears that he ought to give", just as if he were suing on a loan. From this it follows that a pupil, to whom a payment has been made in error without the authority of his tutor, is no more liable in an action for the recovery of an undue payment than he would be in an action on a loan. But it may be said that this kind of obligation does not rest on contract because a person who gives something in payment intends rather to discharge an existing contract than to conclude a new one.

§ 414.

2. Again a person who receives a thing that he may make use of it, that is on loan (*commodatum*), is bound *re* and may be sued in an action on the loan. But this kind of loan is very different from *mutuum*, for the thing is not given to him with the intention of making it his property and therefore he is bound to give it back. If a thing received as a *mutuum* has been lost by some accident, as by fire, earthquake, shipwreck, or the onset of robbers or foes, the borrower remains bound just the same. But if a person has received something as a loan for use, no doubt he must exercise the highest diligence in keeping the thing, and it is not enough for him to have shown the degree of diligence which he usually applies to his own affairs, if a more diligent person might have kept the thing safe. But he is not answerable for *vis major* or inevitable accident, provided that it is not due to his own fault; for if I have lent you something, and you choose to take it abroad with you, and you lose it in consequence of an attack of enemies or pirates or from shipwreck, you are undoubtedly liable for its restoration. A thing is said to be lent, if you receive a thing for use without making or agreeing to make any payment. If payment is part of the transaction it is a contract of hire, for *commodatum* must be gratuitous.

§ 418.

3. If a person receives a thing as a deposit, he is bound *re*, and can be sued for its return in the *actio depositi*. But he is liable only for *dolus*, not for *culpa*, that is carelessness and neglect; and so a person is not liable, if through his failing to keep it carefully, it

has been stolen; for if a person has given a thing for safe-keeping to a careless friend, he must thank his own want of caution, if it is stolen. 4. A creditor who receives a thing as a pledge is bound re and can be sued for its restoration in the *actio pigneraticia*. But since a pledge is given for the advantage of both parties, of the debtor in order that he may get credit, and of the creditor in security of the debt, the law requires<sup>52</sup> the creditor to exhibit exact diligence in the keeping of the thing: if he does so, and the thing is lost by some chance occurrence, he is secure from attack, and is not prevented from suing for the debt. § 423

#### IV. VERBAL CONTRACTS

427. There were three verbal contracts:—

1. *dotis dictio*;
2. *jusjurandum liberti* or *jurata promissio operarum*;
3. *stipulatio*.

The first two were of comparatively small importance. They are mentioned by Gaius.<sup>53</sup> The text of the Verona palimpsest, which at this point is defective, is supplied by the epitome included in the *Lex Romana Visigothorum* (§ 26).

428. *DOTIS DICTIO*—a formal constitution of a *dos* made by the woman herself, an agnatic male ascendant, or her debtor (§ 209)<sup>54</sup>. It was superseded by an enactment of Theodosius II of A.D. 428, which permitted the constitution of a *dos* by an informal agreement (§ 514).

429. *JUSJURANDUM LIBERTI*.—When a master manumitted a slave it was usual to require him to undertake an engagement (frequently onerous) to render services after manumission (§ 69). Since a slave could not bind himself by a civil law contract, his undertaking was secured by an oath, which repeated after manumission created a civil liability. This persisted under Justinian. G. 3. 96.

430. *STIPULATIO*.—This was immeasurably more important. It consisted essentially in a formal question and answer. One party (*stipulator* or *reus stipulandi*) said to another (*reus promittendi*), *e.g.* “Do you promise to give me one thousand sesterces?” The other said, “I promise”. This concluded the contract and gave rise to a legal obligation on the part of the promisor to do what he had promised. It was essential that there should be precise correspondence between question

<sup>52</sup> *Placuit sufficere*. The word *sufficere* does not carry the implication of the English “to be sufficient”. It is therefore unnecessary to inquire whether the text intends to exclude the higher liability for *custodia* (§ 404) suggested by some apparently classical texts (*Dig.* 13. 7. 13, 1; *Cod.* 8. 13. 19).

<sup>53</sup> G. 3. 95a.

<sup>54</sup> *Ulp.* VI, 2.

and answer. The contract was unilateral and *stricti juris*. The meaning of the word is unexplained. Justinian, following Paulus, derives it from a word *stipulus* (otherwise unknown), said to mean "firm", and some other doubtful etymologies have been suggested.

#### 431. ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE STIPULATION.

The remote origin of the stipulation is obscure. At one time the idea was entertained that it was derived from the *nexum*, itself a specialised form of the *mancipatio*. Thus Maine says, "The question and answer of the stipulation were unquestionably the *nexum* in a simplified shape".<sup>55</sup> But this theory is rejected on many grounds. It is enough to mention one, namely (to quote Girard) that "a dialogue cannot be a simplification of a monologue".<sup>56</sup> Girard's own view is that the origin of the stipulation is to be found in the oath. One of his arguments was that the oath is said by Cicero to be mentioned in the Twelve Tables,<sup>57</sup> while the stipulation, so far as appeared, was not, and Girard thought that the latter might be a continuation of the former. But this inference is ruled out by the newly discovered fragments of Gaius, from which it appears that by the Law of the Twelve Tables the *legis actio per iudicis postulationem* was the method prescribed for suing on a stipulation.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, some support for this view is found in the earliest recorded form of the verbal contract consisting in the solemn formula—*spondesne?—spondeo—*"Do you pledge your word?"—"I pledge my word", which there is reason to believe originally implied an oath. It is significant, too, that Gaius tells us that, though in civil transactions this form of words was confined to citizens, it was also employed when negotiating peace with a foreign prince in the words, "*pacem futuram spondes?*"—"Do you pledge your word that peace shall be?" But such negotiations were commonly accompanied by some religious ceremonial. It is not too adventurous, therefore, to conclude that the stipulation in its early form of *sponsio* had its origin in religion and possibly in an oath. Later, the religious element was dropped and a civil contract came into existence sanctioned by civil remedies. As to the starting point of this "secularisation", various views are held. Perhaps the theory most in favour at the moment is that the civil contract began as a guarantee in connection with legal process. It is pointed out that frequently

<sup>55</sup> *Ancient Law*, p. 339. As to *nexum*, see Buckl. *T.* p. 429; *M.* p. 259; Jolowicz, p. 166; and below, § 507.

<sup>56</sup> Girard, p. 516.

<sup>57</sup> *de Off.* 3. 31 111. <sup>58</sup> *G.* 4. 17a; (Teubner ed. 1935); *infra*, § 660

the formula is not, "Do you promise to give?" (active voice), but, "Do you promise giving?" (passive voice), a phrase more applicable to performance by a third person than by the promisor.

432. As we have seen, the civil contract at first required the use of the words *spondesne? spondeo*, which were available only to Roman citizens. The next stage of development consisted in admitting other and less formal words such as *promittis? promitto—fidepromittis? fidepromitto—fidejubes? fidejubeo—dabis? dabo*—and in making these forms available also to foreigners. This made them part of the *jus gentium* 3. 15. 1. in the only precise meaning that can be given to that phrase, viz. the law which the Romans applied to aliens and to citizens alike (§ 49).

The Greek equivalent of the above words was also admitted; or the question might be in Greek, the answer in Latin (or *vice versa*); and, ultimately, any language might be employed, provided that question and answer corresponded. Even the requirement of precise correspondence was relaxed. If Titius says, "Do you promise ten?" and Gaius replies, "I promise five", or if Titius says, "Do you promise five?", and Gaius replies, "I promise ten", there was in either case a good stipulation for the lesser sum. At least this was the later law, though in the Digest it appears under the name of Ulpian.<sup>59</sup> If one person says, *dabis?*—"Will you give?" and the other replies, *quidni?*—"Why not?" (or "of course"), Ulpian says (or by interpolation is made to say) that there is a binding promise.<sup>60</sup>

433. Another development was to reduce the stipulation to writing. This practice goes back at least to the time of Cicero, and became very common under the Empire.<sup>61</sup> It was usual to conclude the written record with the words, "*Rogavit Titius — spopondit Maevius*" (Titius questioned — Maevius promised), or a similar turn of phrase.<sup>61a</sup> What if the writing recorded the promise, but not the preceding interrogation? Even this was enough, at least in the later law. We read in the Institutes (the passage repeats Paulus, who states the effect of a rescript of Severus and Caracalla of A.D. 200), "If a written instrument records that a person has promised the effect is the same as if he had replied to a preceding question."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Dig. 45. 1. 1, 4: Ulpian (perhaps interpolated); *secus* G. 3. 102, and Inst. 3. 19. 5 reverting *per incuriam* to the older law. Girard, p. 519, n. 7.

<sup>60</sup> Dig. 45. 1. 1, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Girard, p. 520, n. 1; Roby II. 11.

<sup>61a</sup> Dig. 2. 14. 7, 12.

<sup>62</sup> Inst. 3. 19. 7; Paul *Sent.* 5. 7. 2; Cod. 8. 37. 1. Of course, Paul of the *Sentences* is not always the genuine Paulus and it has even been maintained that the rescript betrays the hand of Justinian's editors.



434. The oral stipulation continued to exist, consisting, as it did from the beginning, in question and answer. Even this requirement may have been rendered unnecessary by the Emperor Leo, who, by a constitution of A.D. 472, enacted that any expression of intention should be sufficient to create a valid stipulation.<sup>63</sup> If this is to be understood to refer to oral contracts, we get a liberty of contracting by mere word of mouth, admitted in few modern systems of law. But it is at least possible that Leo's enactment refers to stipulations reduced to writing. This would be in accordance with the predilection of the Eastern Empire for the use of written instruments. There are those who hold that, notwithstanding the manipulation of Justinian's commissioners, the Digest remained in many respects an ancient monument, and, in particular, the oral stipulation may have been for practical purposes replaced by the written cautio.

§. 15. 1.

435. All these developments left unaffected the cardinal principle that the parties must come together for the conclusion of the contract, a feature which throughout its history distinguishes the stipulation from the consensual contracts of modern law. This requirement is affirmed in the Institutes when it is said that no verbal contract can be validly concluded without the presence of the parties (*item verborum obligatio inter absentes concepta inutilis est*). But this, too, was reduced to a shadow by Justinian's rescript to the advocates of Caesarea mentioned in the text.

§. 19. 12.

436. The result, then, of a long process of development is that a contract effected by a solemn form of spoken words, and, possibly, secured by the sanction of religion, has ended in a formless written contract. It is almost, but not quite, true to say that in the latest Roman Law any written agreement was enforced as a stipulation, for it remained necessary that the instrument should be intended to take effect as a stipulation and not as a mere pact,<sup>64</sup> or a mere acknowledgment of a debt.

436a. How was an oral stipulation proved? This question cannot fail to present itself to the reflective mind. It is true that the existence of a contract and the proof of its existence are subjects too often confused by students and by "the simple-minded layman". But it is fair to raise the question in relation to a contract in which for many centuries

<sup>63</sup> Cod. 8. 37(38). 10. *Omnes stipulationes, etiamsi non sollemnibus vel directis, sed quibuscumque verbis pro consensu contrahentium compositae sint, legibus cognitae suam habeant firmitatem.*

<sup>64</sup> Dig. 2. 14. 7, 12.

everything depended upon the use of question and answer and a precise correspondence between them. It might have been expected that the texts would, at least, have given some hint. But they are silent. This leaves an uneasy feeling that we have not been told the whole story, and that the picture of the stipulation which has come down to us does not tell us what actually took place. From many passages in Cicero it is plain that as early as his time stipulations were commonly reduced to writing. The oral stipulation occupies a place in the texts out of all proportion to its real importance.

437. SCOPE OF THE STIPULATION.—Unlike the rest of the Roman contracts which had a limited field of operation, the stipulation was applicable to any kind of agreement. Thus a man might stipulate for:—

- (a) a specific sum of money;
- (b) some other specific thing;
- (c) any act or abstention, even of an uncertain or indefinite character. These three types of obligation were the occasion of corresponding actions, *viz.*—
  - (i) *actio certae pecuniae creditae* or *condictio certae pecuniae*;
  - (ii) *condictio triticaria*;
  - (iii) *actio ex stipulatu* (§§ 711—718).

3. 15 pr.

438. A particular use of the stipulation was to novate (§ 645) an existing debt. This had the advantage of facilitating proof and of permitting the creditor to sue by *condictio*. The jurist Aquilius devised a special form of stipulation known as the *stipulatio Aquiliana*, by which all outstanding claims which one person might have against another were novated and then (if this was desired) discharged by *acceptilatio* (§ 640).

3. 29. 2.

439. PROCEDURAL STIPULATIONS.—Besides their common use as a form of contract between parties, stipulations were also employed as an incident of judicial procedure corresponding to what we call a recognisance. Such stipulations might be required (a) by the *judex*; (b) by the *praetor* (or *aedile*); (c) by either *judex* or *praetor* (*aedile*). This is the basis of Justinian's classification of stipulations as judicial, praetorian, conventional, and common. For instances see the text.

3. 18 pr.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK III (TIT. XV, XVIII, XIX. SECS. 12, 17)

## TITLE XV

*Of the verbal obligation*

§ 430. A verbal obligation is contracted by question and answer, when we stipulate for something to be given to us or done for us. It gives rise to two actions, a *condictio*, if the stipulation relates to something certain, an *actio ex stipulatu*, if it relates to something uncertain. The word stipulation is derived from an old word *stipulus* meaning *firm*, which perhaps itself comes from *stipes*—the trunk of a tree.

§ 432. 1. Formerly certain traditional words were employed. *Spondeo? Spondeo. Promittis? Promitto. Fidepromittis? Fidepromitto. Fidejubes? Fidejubeo. Dabis? Dabo. Facies? Faciam.*<sup>65</sup> It makes no difference whether the stipulation is made in Latin or Greek or any other language, provided that both parties understand the language used. Nor need they use the same language. All that is required is that the answer should correspond with the question. Two Greeks may contract in Latin. Such were the verbal solemnities formerly in use. But afterwards the Emperor Leo made a constitution, which put an end to verbal solemnities and required merely that the parties should agree and understand one another's meaning, expressing their intention in any words they please.

§ 434.

2. Stipulations are either absolute, or with an indication of time, or conditional. Absolute, as when one says, "Do you promise to give five aurei?", in which case demand can be made at once. With an indication of time as when a date of payment is added: for instance, "Do you promise to give ten aurei on the next first of March?" If a time is specified in the stipulation, a debt is contracted immediately, but demand cannot be made before the day arrives, nor indeed on the actual day, for the debtor has the whole of that day in which to make payment, since it is not certain that he has not paid on the promised day until the day is over.

3. If you stipulate, "Do you promise to give ten aurei each year I live?" the obligation is understood to be absolute and without limit of time, for a debt cannot be contracted so as to last only up to a certain time.<sup>66</sup> But if your heir sues he may be met with a plea founded upon the terms of the agreement (*exceptio pacti*).

4. A stipulation is conditional when the obligation is to take effect subject to some event, so that the stipulation comes into operation, if something is done, or if something is not done: for example: "If Titius is made consul do you promise to give five aurei?" If a person stipulates, "If I have not gone up to the Capitol, do you

<sup>65</sup> Do you engage yourself? I do engage myself—Do you promise? I do promise—Do you pledge your credit? I do pledge my credit—Do you guarantee? I do guarantee—Will you give? I will give—Will you do? I will do.

<sup>66</sup> Dig. 44. 7. 44, 1. But see Buckl. *M.* p. 266.

promise to give?" ; this is equivalent to a stipulation for something to be given when he dies. A conditional stipulation merely gives rise to a hope that the thing will fall due, and we transmit this hope to our heirs if we die before the condition is realised.

5. A place of performance may be introduced into the stipulation, for example, "Do you promise to give at Carthage?" This stipulation seems to be in terms absolute, but actually it involves a delay sufficient to give the promisor time to make payment at Carthage. Consequently, if any one at Rome stipulates, "Do you promise to give at Carthage to-day?", the stipulation is ineffectual, because it is impossible to contract on such terms. 6. Conditions which are expressed with reference to an event which is past or present either render the obligation void from the beginning or do not postpone its operation; for instance, "If Titius was consul, or if Maevius is alive, do you promise to give?" If the facts are not so, the stipulation is invalid; if they are so, the stipulation takes effect immediately. For, if things are certain in themselves, they do not delay the obligation, though they may be uncertain in our own mind.

7. Not only things but also acts may be the subject of a stipulation, as when we stipulate for something to be done, or not to be done. In stipulations of this kind it is best to add a penalty, lest the amount at issue should remain uncertain and the plaintiff be compelled to prove the amount of his interest. So if a person stipulates for something to be done, he should add a penal clause—"If this is not done, do you promise to pay ten aurei by way of penalty?" But if the stipulation comprises in one and the same contract both things to be done and also things not to be done the penal clause will run—"If anything is done contrary to what is stipulated or if anything is not done as stipulated, then by way of penalty do you promise to pay ten aurei?"

## TITLE XVIII

### *Of the different kinds of stipulation*

Stipulations are classified as judicial, praetorian, conventional and common, that is both praetorian and judicial. 1. Judicial stipulations are incidental to the functions of the judge alone, such as security against fraud, or for pursuit of a runaway slave or payment of his value.<sup>67</sup> 2. Praetorian stipulations are incidental to the functions of the praetor alone, such as security against apprehended damage or for payment of legacies. The term praetorian must be understood to include stipulations required by the aediles, for these too depend upon the jurisdiction of a magistrate. 3. Conventional stipulations are not contracted by the order of a judge or praetor, but express the agreement of the parties. One may say that of such stipulations there are as many kinds as there are things about which men may conclude agreements. 4. Common stipulations are, for example, a stipulation for the security of a pupil's estate;

§ 439.

<sup>67</sup> Dig. 4. 2. 14, 11; 6. 1. 21.

for the praetor directs the guardian to give such security, and sometimes the judge does the same, if the circumstances call for it. Another example is when a procurator is required to give security that his principal will ratify his acts.

#### TITLE XIX, SECS. 12, 17

- § 435. 12. There can be no verbal obligation unless the parties come together. This requirement, however, often led to litigation, when, sometimes after a considerable lapse of time, persons disposed to take captious objections alleged that they or the other parties were not present when the contract was concluded. Accordingly, in order to bring such disputes to a speedy conclusion, we have promulgated a constitution addressed to the advocates of Caesarea, which provides that complete credit is to be given to writings which declare the parties to be present, unless the party who makes such unworthy allegations produces the most convincing proof either by writing or by the word of competent witnesses that he or the other party were in some other place during the whole of the day on which the instrument was executed.<sup>68</sup>
- § 433. 17. If a written instrument states that a person has promised, the promise is deemed to have been given in answer to a preceding question.

#### V. THE CONTRACT LITTERIS

440. The written contract or contract litteris finds a place in the classification of contracts both in Gaius and in Justinian, but the literal contract of Gaius is not the literal contract of Justinian. Long before Justinian the old literal contract was a thing of the past. Justinian substitutes for it a written instrument, which was produced in proof of a loan and was governed by special rules of evidence.

441. In the old law the contract litteris consisted in an entry in a creditor's ledger (*codex accepti et expensi*) of a payment, either actually made, or supposed to be made, to a debtor.<sup>69</sup> "Supposed to be made", for this contract was usually employed to novate a pre-existing debt, *e.g.* for goods sold and delivered. The effect was to replace a *bonae fidei* contract by a *stricti juris* contract (§ 395) and to give the creditor the severer remedy of the *condictio*, besides which he was relieved from the necessity of proving the items of the account. In order to effect the novation without disturbing the account between the parties it was necessary to feign that the old debt

<sup>68</sup> Cod. 8. 37 (38). 14, 2.

<sup>69</sup> This is the commonly accepted view, but little is known. The term *expensilatio*, usually applied to this contract, is not found in the texts.

had been discharged and a new debt contracted in its place. This involved cross entries (*nomina transcripticia*). In the case put above the debt was said to be transferred from the thing to the person (a *re in personam*); but sometimes the purpose was to substitute one debtor for another, and then the debt was said to be transferred from person to person (a *persona in personam*).<sup>70</sup> It must be observed that it was the writing which made the obligation, not the fact (if it was the fact) that money had changed hands. The contract was formal (§ 396). Gaius distinguishes these *nomina transcripticia* from *nomina arcaria* or cash entries (*arca*=cash-box), which were evidence of a *mutuum*, but did not in themselves constitute a contract.<sup>71</sup>

442. The literal contract was in most respects inferior to the stipulation. It was only available for a money-debt. Only citizens could be creditors, and it was questioned whether peregrines could be debtors.<sup>72</sup> But it had one advantage, *viz.* that it could be contracted *inter absentes*.<sup>73</sup> It implied a special system of book-keeping, and when this fell into disuse, the literal contract became obsolete. It was the only written contract known to the Roman Law. But in the Greek parts of the Empire other written contracts were in use known as *syngraphae* and *chirographa*.<sup>74</sup> It seems that in these cases by Greek Law the writing produced an obligation in itself, and was not merely evidence of an independent contract.

443. Justinian devotes a Title to "Obligation by writing". He is not referring to the old ledger contract, which, as the text says, was no longer in use, but to the practice of giving an acknowledgment of a debt in a written instrument. In principle this was evidence of a *mutuum*, unless the instrument could be construed as a promise to repay a loan, in which case it was evidence of a stipulation. It might happen that no money had in fact changed hands. If sued on the contract, the alleged debtor could plead the *exceptio doli* or the *exceptio non numeratae pecuniae*<sup>75</sup>; in the alternative he could bring an action to be released from his engagement and to have the instrument returned to him (*condictio sine causa*). In either event the burden of proof lay on him to show that the money had not been paid. But from about the end of the second

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<sup>70</sup> G. 3. 128—130.

<sup>71</sup> G. 3. 131.

<sup>72</sup> G. 3. 133.

<sup>73</sup> G. 3. 138.

<sup>74</sup> G. 3. 134.

<sup>75</sup> G. 4. 116; Inst. 4. 13. 2.

century A.D. the burden of proof changed, and the rule was established that if the alleged debtor denied his liability, he could cast upon the other party the burden of proving payment.<sup>76</sup> As before, he could raise the issue by way of exception or by bringing an action. The proceeding was known by the general name of *querela non numeratae pecuniae*—the complaint that the money had not been paid. To prevent abuse of this defence Justinian enacted that a defendant who denied the writing, or admitted the writing but said that he had not received the money, if the case went against him, was to be liable for double the amount claimed as in the *actio legis Aquiliae* (§ 615).

444. This procedure was very beneficial to the alleged debtor, but it would have been unreasonable to allow him to raise the issue without limit of time. Accordingly a limit was fixed, first of one year, later of five, and by Justinian of two years, after which the *querela* was no longer available to the alleged debtor (unless, as Justinian enacted, he made his exception perpetual by formal notice to the creditor, or, in certain circumstances, by lodging a protest with the Court).<sup>77</sup> He was, in fact, as the *Institutes* say, bound by the writing and liable to the *condictio*. The text adds the qualifying words, "in the absence, that is, of a verbal obligation". This means that if the instrument could be construed as a stipulation, he would be liable on the verbal contract, which it was no longer open to him to impugn. If it could not be so construed, he was liable on a *mutuum*, which it was no longer open to him to deny. This is the truth of the matter. But Justinian hesitates to say that he is bound by a *mutuum*, for there may not in fact have been any *mutuum* at all. So he says that he is bound by the writing.

445. It is generally supposed that in Justinian's day there was no genuine written contract, and that in the *Institutes* a written contract is invented so as to conform to the four classes of contract to be found in *Gaius*. Thus Moyle says, "Justinian's attempt to pass off the instrument as a literal contract, which is due merely to the habit of reproducing, if possible, the arrangement and terminology of *Gaius*, is forced and unhappy".<sup>78</sup> But it must be remembered that a written contract persisted in the Greek provinces of the Empire notwithstanding its inconsistency with Roman Law,

<sup>76</sup> *Cod.* 4. 30. 3. (*Caracalla A.D.* 215).

<sup>77</sup> *Cod.* 4. 30. 14, 4.

<sup>78</sup> Moyle, p. 498.

and the late Professor Collinet contended that Justinian deliberately incorporated the Greek usage in his own system, but only to the very limited extent indicated in the text. It seems more probable that the whole question is one of evidence. After the lapse of the two years the alleged debtor is, as an English lawyer would say, estopped from saying that he is not liable. There does not seem to be anything particularly "forced, or unhappy" in saying that he is bound by the writing. But this is not the same thing as to say that he is bound by a written contract.

### THE INSTITUTES

#### BOOK III

#### TITLE XXI

##### *Of the obligation litteris*

Formerly an obligation used to be contracted by writing, namely § 441, by ledger entries, but these are no longer in use. Of course, if a person has stated in writing that he is indebted for a sum of money, which in fact has not been paid to him, he cannot after a considerable lapse of time raise the plea that the money was not paid. This has often been laid down in imperial constitutions. Thus it happens § 444. that even today he is bound by a writing when the querela is no longer available and a *condictio* may be brought upon the writing, always supposing that there is no verbal contract. The lapse of time which excluded the querela was formerly defined by imperial constitutions as a period of five years; but to prevent the possibility of creditors being for a long time defrauded of their money, our constitution has cut it down to a period of two years, after which this defence is no longer available.

### VI. THE CONSENSUAL CONTRACTS

446. In four cases consent alone makes a contract. These are:—1. sale (*emptio-venditio*); 2. hire (*locatio-conductio*); 3. partnership (*societas*); 4. mandate (*mandatum*). The presence of the parties is not required, as it is in stipulation, consequently, the contract can be concluded by letter or by messenger. All these contracts are *bonae fidei* and bilateral, giving rise to reciprocal actions. In the first three, which are "perfectly bilateral" (§ 394) the duty of performance is reciprocal. A plaintiff will not succeed in his action unless he can show that he has performed or is ready and willing to perform his corresponding part of the contract.<sup>78a</sup>

<sup>78a</sup> Girard, p. 567; Sohm (Liedtke's translation), p. 397; *infra*, p. 310.



## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK III

## TITLE XXII

*Of obligation by consent*

Obligations are contracted by consent in the contracts of sale, hire, partnership and mandate. 1. The reason why in these cases obligation is said to be contracted by consent is because writing is not required, or the presence of the parties, nor need anything be transferred to give substance to the obligation. All that is required is that the parties should agree. 2. Consequently contracts of this kind may be concluded though the parties do not come together, as by letter or by messenger. 3. Again, in these contracts each party is bound to the other to do what good faith requires, whereas in the stipulation one party is the stipulator (or promisee), the other party is the promisor.

## VII. SALE

447. Sale may be defined as a contract whereby one person promises to transfer to another a thing and to procure to him the undisturbed and permanent possession of it, and the other on his part promises to pay a price.

The essential elements in the contract are: Consent—Thing—Price.

448. CONSENT.—When is the contract of sale complete?

The answer differs according as the parties intend to conclude it by spoken or by written words.

3. 23 pr.

449. A. If the parties do not intend to reduce their contract to writing, it is complete as soon as the thing and the price are ascertained.

B. If the parties do intend to reduce their contract to writing, *i.e.*, do not intend to be bound until they have done so, it is not complete until it has been reduced to writing accordingly, *viz.* the instruments must be written in the hand of the contracting parties, or, if written by a third person, must be subscribed by the contracting party, and, if they are notarial, must be formally completed and released to the parties.<sup>79</sup> The parties may intend the writing to serve as a record of an already completed agreement. Whether they intend to be bound independently of the writing, or not until their agreement has been put into writing, is, as in English law, in each case a question of fact.

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<sup>79</sup> I am indebted to Professor de Zulueta (*The Roman Law of Sale*) for this translation of "*partibus absoluta*".

450. ARRA.—Sometimes a special element was introduced into the contract in the form of arra or earnest. The word has two different applications.

(1) Originally it meant a coin, or other thing, handed over by one party to the other, usually by the buyer to the seller, as we say, "to bind the bargain," *i.e.* to indicate that the bargaining of the parties had ended in a firm agreement. It was proof of the conclusion of the contract—*argumentum emptionis et venditionis contractae*. The wide diffusion of this practice (not limited to the contract of sale) appears from the etymology of the word, which came to the Romans from the Phaenicians through the Greeks and in turn was transmitted through the French to the English in the word "earnest". But it must not be inferred from this that the institution was a foreign importation into Europe. In English and the allied languages it was popularly known as God's penny, because, if not consumed in drink, it was given to the poor; unless we accept from Grotius the cynical suggestion that it was so called "since it generally does not much exceed the amount which it is usual to give to the poor in God's name".<sup>80</sup> The commentators call this primitive type of arra "*arra confirmatoria*". It was in use for simple transactions among simple people.

(2) By an extension the word came to include a deposit on sale, *i.e.* an instalment of the purchase price. If the purchaser failed to pay the balance at the time or times agreed the sale was cancelled and the seller kept the deposit. This was the consequence of a special clause in the contract providing that in such event the property should be unsold (*ut fundus inemptus sit*).<sup>81</sup> It took effect as a resolute condition and was termed a *lex commissoria*.<sup>82</sup> This penalised the defaulting purchaser. In the later Empire the penalty worked both ways. If the party who gave the earnest withdrew without just cause the other party kept it. If the party who received the earnest withdrew he had to return it and as much again. From Egyptian documents it appears that the deposit might actually amount to more than half the purchase price.<sup>83</sup> This rendered repudiation of the contemplated sale extremely unlikely. On the other hand either party was free to withdraw if he was willing to incur the forfeit. The commentators call this type of arra "*arra poenitentialis*". In these cases there was as yet no contract between the parties. This awaited a

<sup>80</sup> *Introduction to Dutch Jurisprudence*, 3. 14 27.

<sup>81</sup> *Dig.* 18 1. 6, 1.

<sup>82</sup> *Dig.* 18. 3.

<sup>83</sup> Girard, p. 577, n. 5.

written instrument to be executed later. Meanwhile, the conditions of the *arra* were determined by a preliminary agreement verbal or in writing (*pactum arrale*). All this reflects the Greek contractual system, which did not recognise an executory contract of sale. *Arra* served to supply the *lacuna*. But it is plain from Justinian's constitution, to be mentioned presently, that the Greek and the Roman theories of sale were in unreconciled conflict.

3. 23 *pr.* 451. Justinian does not treat the subject of *arra* as a whole, but refers to it in a constitution included in the Code, and again in the Institutes, in connection with his legislation on the subject of written contracts. There was to be no binding contract until the instrument was executed with the statutory formalities. Until this was done, but not afterwards, either party might withdraw, subject to the usual penalty. This was to be so even though the parties had not made it an express term in the contract. In the case of contracts without writing Justinian made no change. The *arra* was probative, and at the same time penal, if the parties meant to make it so.

452. SUBJECT MATTER.—The next essential element in the contract of sale is the thing or *res*. This must be:—(a) in existence or capable of existing. You cannot sell a dead slave or a live unicorn; (b) in *commercio*, *i.e.* capable of being owned. You cannot sell a free man, or a *res sacra, religiosa* or *sancta*; (c) something in which the buyer acquires an interest under the contract. You cannot buy a thing which is yours already. If these conditions are satisfied, the most various things may be the subject of the contract; a thing corporeal or a thing incorporeal (as a servitude, a debt, an inheritance), a thing now in existence, or a thing which will or may come into existence hereafter—*venditio rei speratae*, *e.g.* next year's crop—*venditio spei*, *e.g.* what I catch in my net.<sup>84</sup> (In the first case the sale goes off if there is no crop, in the second case you take your chance); a thing which belongs to the seller (*res sua*), a thing which belongs to someone else (*res aliena*).<sup>85</sup>

But contrary to our modern notions, a thing generally described (*genus*) cannot be the subject of a contract of sale. Thus, I cannot contract to buy or sell "a thousand bushels of wheat". It seems that bargains of this sort were effected by stipulation. But I may contract to buy "a thousand bushels

<sup>84</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 8.

<sup>85</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 28. But if a vendor knew that the thing did not belong to him and the purchaser did not, he was liable *ex empto* even before eviction. Dig. 19. 1. 30, 1.

of the grain in your barn". This was considered to be sufficiently specific.

453. PRICE.—The third element is price. This must:—  
(a) consist in money; (b) be certain (*certum*); (c) genuine (*verum*); and (d) in certain cases, reasonable (*justum*), as defined by law.

454. (a) The price must consist in money. On this point the Sabinians and Proculians held divergent views. The 3. 23. 2. Proculian view prevailed.

455. (b) The price must be certain or ascertainable (*certum*). 3. 23. 1. This it was held to be if it was to be fixed by a third person, but not if it was left to the discretion of one of the parties to the contract. If the third person did not fix the price the contract failed. In English Law, where the price is not determined the buyer must pay a reasonable price.<sup>86</sup> This means that there is a contract to sell at a reasonable price. In Roman Law this would not be a contract of sale. If the goods were delivered, there would be an innominate contract, giving rise to an *actio praescriptis verbis* (§ 509).

456. (c) The price must be genuine (*verum*). It must not be merely pretended, as when a price is named *pro forma*, but there is no intention that it should be demanded or paid; or merely derisory, as when a valuable property is expressed to be sold for a single sesterce. In both these cases the transaction (if anything) is not sale, but gift.

457. (d) The price (in certain cases) must be reasonable (*justum*). This element in the contract finds expression in the principle of relief on the ground of so-called *laesio enormis*, i.e. more than ordinary prejudice. It is thought to have been introduced into the law by Justinian, though in the Code it is attributed by interpolation to Diocletian.<sup>87</sup> A vendor who had received less than half the fair price, as it was at the time of the sale, might recover what he had sold, returning the money paid for it, subject, however, to the alternative that the purchaser might supplement what he had paid, so as to make up a fair price. Two questions (in particular) have been raised with regard to this rule:—1. whether it applied to movables as well as to land; 2. whether the purchaser had a corresponding right to withdraw, if he had paid more than twice the fair price. So far as Roman Law is concerned, a negative answer must be given to both questions. But the medieval lawyers

<sup>86</sup> *S. G. A.* s. 8 (2).

<sup>87</sup> *Cod.* 4. 44. 2 and 8.

extended the rule in both directions and applied it by analogy to other *bonae fidei* contracts such as hire and partnership. It has passed into some modern systems derived from the Roman Law. By the French Code, art. 1674, "if the vendor has suffered prejudice to the extent of more than seven twelfths in the price of an immovable he has the right to demand the rescission of the sale". Relief on the ground of *laesio enormis* is admitted in the Union of South Africa, but only in the provinces of the Transvaal and Natal, and in Ceylon.<sup>88</sup>

458. We proceed to consider the effect of the contract of sale as regards the duties of the parties.

459. DUTIES OF THE SELLER.—The seller was bound :—

1. to deliver the thing and to give vacant possession;
2. to take care of it until delivery;
3. to guarantee against eviction;
4. to guarantee against undisclosed defects.

460. (1) Duty to deliver and to give vacant possession. The seller was bound to take all necessary steps to transfer to the buyer whatever right he had in the thing sold together with accessories, and in particular to convey it by mancipation, if a *res mancipi*, or by tradition, if it was not.<sup>89</sup> The object of the contract of sale being to make the buyer owner, an agreement that the ownership should not pass was inconsistent with the nature of the contract.<sup>90</sup> But the seller was not bound to make the buyer owner immediately and directly (*rem dare*).<sup>91</sup> He satisfied his duty to deliver, in the absence of expression to the contrary, by giving vacant possession (*rem praestare—vacuam possessionem tradere—rem habere licere*). This proposition may be split into two. First, he must put the buyer in physical possession, which he cannot do, for example, if some other person is in possession by the authority of the praetor, such as legatees or fideicommissaries who have been let into possession in security of their claim, or creditors placed in possession of the estate,<sup>92</sup> or if there is an outstanding usufruct. Secondly, the seller must give vacant possession, that is to say "exclusive possession, not defeasible by interdict, and free from burdens interfering with it except such as had been agreed upon".<sup>93</sup> Thus a civil law heir does not

<sup>88</sup> Lee, p. 234, n. 3.

<sup>89</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 1. 13a. 4.

<sup>90</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 80, 3.

<sup>91</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 25, 1: *qui vendidit necesse non habet fundum emptoris facere, ut cogitur qui fundum stipulanti spopondit.*

<sup>92</sup> Dig. 19. 1. 2, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 488; Dig. 19. 1. 11, 13.

give *vacua possessio* if a praetorian successor can displace the purchaser by the interdict *quorum bonorum*, and if land is burdened with a hypothec, a purchaser may require its liberation.<sup>94</sup> But a praedial servitude was not considered to interfere with possession. Consequently a vendor was not bound to deliver land free of such servitudes unless he had expressly sold it as free (*uti optimus maximusque*).<sup>95</sup> But if he knew that the land was burdened, it was his duty to say so.<sup>96</sup> A lease was no burden on the land, because it gave no real right (§ 480).

461. (2) Duty to take care of the thing until delivery. It may be that in the classical period the vendor was liable for *custodia*, had to keep the thing safe.<sup>97</sup> But in Justinian's system no more was required of him than that he should exercise *exacta diligentia* (*diligentia in custodiendo*). He was liable for *dolus* and for so-called *culpa levis in abstracto* (§ 403), but not if the thing perished by accident or was lost by theft or suffered deterioration, unless he had undertaken to be so, or was in default in making delivery or otherwise to blame. This meant that, in general, the thing was at the risk of the purchaser. We return to this subject later. If § 23. 3. the thing was stolen, destroyed or damaged by a third person, the purchaser was entitled to call upon the vendor for cession of actions (§ 633), *e.g.* *vindicatio*, *actio furti*, *actio legis Aquiliae*.

462. (3) Duty to guarantee against eviction. The law on this matter went through successive phases.<sup>98</sup> In the earliest period a purchaser by *mancipation* whose title was not defended or not effectually defended by his vendor, so that he suffered eviction, had an action for double the price, the (so-called) *actio auctoritatis*.<sup>99</sup> This was of limited application and in cases to which it was inapplicable, or as a substitute for it, the practice grew up of entering into stipulations in certain cases for double the price to be paid in the event of eviction (*stipulatio duplae*), and in other cases, where the property was less valuable, for a simple guarantee against eviction (*stipulatio habere licere*), which gave rise to a claim for an indemnity, if the title proved defective. At a later date these stipulations could be compelled or were implied in the sale, and, ultimately, a purchaser whose right

<sup>94</sup> Dig. 19. 1. 52. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 59.

<sup>96</sup> Dig. 19. 1. 1, 1.

<sup>97</sup> Jors Kunkel, p. 228.

<sup>98</sup> Girard, p. 588.

<sup>99</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 2 17. 3

to possess was called in question could in any event sue for an indemnity in an action on the contract.<sup>100</sup> This replaced the stipulatio habere licere express or implied. But if the property sold was of considerable value it continued to be usual to make an express stipulation for double the price or for less or more as might be agreed,<sup>1</sup> though even where this had not been done, an action might be brought for a multiple of the price, when this was in accordance with local usage.<sup>2</sup>

The action on the stipulation, express or implied, differed from the action for an indemnity in the conditions of its exercise and in the nature of the remedy.<sup>3</sup> The first lay when an action had been brought against or by the purchaser terminating in an adverse decision on his right to possess.<sup>4</sup> In the second, it was enough that his right to possess as purchaser was seriously menaced. In the first the measure of damages was the price or a multiple of the price. In the second the purchaser claimed general damages, and, in particular, the market value of the property at the time of eviction. In the first he must have suffered actual eviction or escaped it by paying the amount of the condemnation (*litis aestimatio*, § 169). In the second he might be still in possession, though by a title not derived from the vendor, e.g. if the thing was given to him by the real owner.<sup>5</sup>

463. (4) Duty to guarantee against undisclosed defects. Here too the law went through a long process of development.

(a) In the most ancient period, if land was sold by mancipation and the vendor had misrepresented its extent, the purchaser had the so-called *actio de modo agri* for double the difference in value—in *duplo ejus quod mentitus est*<sup>6</sup>; and he could also sue upon special terms attached to the mancipation (*leges mancipii*).

464. (b) Later, the vendor was bound by informal representations and guarantees (*dicta et promissa*) made at the time of sale, and was liable for undisclosed defects of which he was aware.<sup>7</sup> But the law did not cast upon him any general duty of warranting the absence of latent defects.

465. (c) Therefore, if a purchaser wished to protect himself, he had to do so by stipulation, and this came to be

<sup>100</sup> Girard, pp. 595-6; Buck. *T.* p. 489.

<sup>1</sup> Dig. 21. 2. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Dig. 21. 1. 31, 20; 21. 2. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Girard, p. 594; Buckl. *T.* p. 490; *M.* p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> Dig. 21. 2. 16, 1; 24.

<sup>5</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 2. 17. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 2. 17. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Moyle, *Contract of Sale in the Civil Law*, p. 189.

the usual course. It might be supposed that this guarantee, like the guarantee against eviction (with which it was frequently combined in a single stipulation) would have come to be implied in every contract of sale, but the law took a different line of development.<sup>8</sup>

466. (d) The *curule aediles* (§ 13), acting under their powers of police, drew up rules requiring sellers of slaves and cattle to make a public declaration of certain specified defects, moral (in the case of slaves) and physical, and gave actions against them when defects became apparent, whether the sellers knew of them or not.<sup>9</sup> These were the *actio redhibitoria*, and the *actio aestimatoria* or *quantum minoris*. The first lay within six months to have the sale rescinded against restoration of the price, if the thing had defects (so-called *redhibitory* defects) which destroyed or impaired its usefulness to the purchaser. In the second action, which in similar circumstances could be brought within the year, the purchaser affirmed the sale and claimed a reduction in the price.

467. (e) The edict of the *aediles* protected purchasers of slaves and live stock (at first in the market, later anywhere). The civil law gave a remedy only in the circumstances above described. But ultimately the *aedilician* remedies came to be extended to every kind of sale. If the texts could be taken at their face value, this development would seem to have taken place as early as Ulpian or even Labeo.<sup>10</sup> But it is generally agreed that they are interpolated. The development was complete in Justinian's system, if not before.

468. The general result was that if a vendor had guaranteed the existence of certain qualities, or the absence of defects, or if he had failed to declare defects of which he was aware, he was liable for general damages in an *actio empti*. In other cases he was limited to the remedies given by the *actio redhibitoria* and the *actio quanti minoris*.

469. DUTIES OF THE BUYER.—The buyer was bound :—

1. to pay the price, with interest if payment was overdue,<sup>10a</sup> but not unless the seller was ready and willing to do his part. Therefore, he might refuse to pay, if the seller failed to deliver, or had sold in bad faith a thing which did not belong to him, or did not give *vacua possessio*, or if proceedings had been instituted contesting the buyer's title.<sup>11</sup> In all these cases, if sued

<sup>8</sup> Girard, p. 598. "The variety of the cases prevented universal forms from becoming established," de Zulueta, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> Dig. 21. 1. 1, 2: *dummodo sciamus venditorem etiamsi ignoraverit ea quae aediles praestari jubent, tamen teneri debere.*

<sup>10</sup> Dig. 21. 1. 1; 63.

<sup>11</sup> Girard, p. 603.

<sup>10a</sup> Dig. 22. 1. 32, 2; Paul, *Sent.* 2. 17. 9; Cod. 4. 32. 2; 4. 49. 13.



upon the contract, he could plead the defence traditionally known as the *exceptio non adimpleti contractus*—a plea that plaintiff had not carried out his part of the contract. It was not really an *exceptio* (§ 726), but an unqualified denial of plaintiff's claim, and "the plaintiff must prove his performance, while in a true exception the burden of proof was normally on the defendant"<sup>11a</sup>;

2. to take delivery as soon as the seller tendered it, or at the time agreed. Any costs properly incurred by the seller between the date of the contract and delivery were charged to the buyer.<sup>11b</sup>

470. THE THEORY OF RISK.—It has been said above that as soon as the contract was concluded the risk passed to the purchaser. This will require some qualification, but for the present may be accepted as the general rule. It followed that if the thing perished, or was stolen, or suffered deterioration, while in the hands of the seller without fault on his part, the buyer had to pay the price just the same. This is inconsistent with the general principle that delivery and payment are concurrent conditions, each dependent on the other—no delivery, no payment—no payment, no delivery—as well as with the natural expectation that risk and ownership should go together.<sup>12</sup> It may be conceded that the rule is anomalous, but it does not follow that it is unreasonable or unfair. The same consequences follow in modern systems (as the English and the French), which make ownership pass as soon as the contract is concluded. Various attempts have been made to account for the Roman rule. It has been supposed to be a survival from an earlier time when the consensual contract of sale was unknown or in its infancy; thus, it is suggested that there was a time when the bargain was concluded by reciprocal stipulations, each creating an absolute duty of performance—on the one side a duty to deliver, on the other side a duty to pay; or, again, it is said that the rule is reminiscent of the *mancipatory sale*, which passed the property forthwith without delivery. All this is speculation. In sharp contrast with such theories is the view that the rule is post-classical and that in the classical period of Roman Law the risk did not pass to the purchaser until delivery, *i.e.*, risk and ownership went together.<sup>13</sup> On this hypothesis, the doctrine of risk

<sup>11a</sup> Buckl. *T.*, p. 493. This applies equally to the seller and to the other perfectly bilateral contracts, hire and partnership (*supra*, § 446).

<sup>11b</sup> Dig. 19. 1. 13, 20.

<sup>12</sup> The maxim *res perit domino* is not Roman. For its use in English Law see *Bayne v. Walker* (1815), 3 Dow. 233.

<sup>13</sup> Dig. 18. 6. 13 (12); 15 (14) pr. But these texts admit of another interpretation.

accepted by Justinian is a compromise between the Roman rule that ownership passed on delivery, and not before, and the Greek rule that ownership (and consequently risk) passed:—(a) if the sale was for cash, when the price was paid; and (b) if the sale was on credit, when an acknowledgment of indebtedness was handed over by the buyer to the seller. Justinian (it is suggested) stopped short of admitting the Greek principle that property was transferred by agreement without delivery, but in his theory of risk went a long way towards doing so, with the consequence that this principle, as Professor Arangio Ruiz puts it, having been “turned out by the door came back by the window”.<sup>14</sup>

471. The rule that the risk passed when the contract was complete did not always mean that it passed as soon as there was a contract binding the parties. The *emptio* must be *perfecta*. This implies that the subject-matter and the price are exactly ascertained and the sale is unconditional.<sup>15</sup> Failing any of these conditions, the risk does not pass. Thus it does not pass:—(1) if the sale is subject to a suspensive condition, which has not yet been satisfied; (2) if the subject-matter of the sale or the amount of the purchase money has not been precisely determined, *e.g.*, if you buy one hundred sacks of wheat from the stock in my granary, and specific sacks have not yet been appropriated to the contract, or if specific goods are sold at so much the pound and have not yet been weighed. The case would be different if the whole lot were sold for a lump sum (*per aversionem*—in *aversione*).<sup>16</sup>

472. If things are sold in the alternative, *e.g.*, if the vendor is to deliver either the slave Stichus or the slave Eros as he pleases, the risk of the first is with the vendor, *i.e.*, if one has perished, he must deliver the other. The risk of the second is with the purchaser, *i.e.*, if both slaves have perished without fault of the vendor the purchaser will nevertheless have to pay the agreed price. The case is the same if the selection is left to the purchaser.<sup>17</sup> The risk of destruction or total loss (*periculum interitus rei*) and the risk of depreciation (*periculum deteriorationis*) usually go together, but where there is a choice of alternatives this is not so. If a vendor has to deliver Stichus or Eros as he pleases, and Stichus goes blind, he may deliver Stichus. The risk of depreciation is with the purchaser, not with the vendor.

<sup>14</sup> *Istituzioni* (2), p. 314.

<sup>15</sup> Dig. 18. 6. 8 pr: *si id quod venient appareat, quid, quale, quantum sit, sit et pretium, et pure venit, perfecta est emptio.*

<sup>16</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 35, 5; 62, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 34, 6.

473. Actions. The vendor had the *actio venditi*, the purchaser the *actio empti* and the aedilician actions (§ 466) which were ultimately absorbed in the *actio empti*.<sup>17a</sup>

474. When did the property in the thing sold pass to the purchaser? Not until delivery, nor even then unless the price was paid or credit given (§ 191).

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III

#### TITLE XXIII

##### *Of purchase and sale*

§ 449

The contract of purchase and sale is concluded as soon as the parties are agreed on the price, although the price has not been paid, and even earnest has not been given. For earnest is merely proof that the contract has been concluded. This must be understood of contracts of purchase and sale which are not reduced to writing. For with regard to this kind of sale we have made no change. But when the contract is put into writing our constitution provides that there shall be no concluded contract, unless the instruments of sale have been written out in the hand of the contracting parties or if written by some one else have been subscribed by the party to the contract, and if the documents are drawn up by a notary unless they have been formally completed and released to the parties. So long as any of these requirements is wanting, there is a *locus poenitentiae* and either party may withdraw from the contract without incurring a penalty. But this is only so, if nothing has been given by way of earnest; for if earnest has been given (whether the agreement for earnest<sup>18</sup> was written or verbal), and either party refuses to complete the contract, then, if it is the purchaser he forfeits what he has given, if it is the vendor he has to return what he has received and as much again. This applies when the parties have not come to any understanding about the earnest.

§ 451.

§ 455.

1. There must be a price. Without a price there can be no sale. Further, the price must be certain. It was much discussed amongst the ancients whether there was a sale if it was agreed that a thing should be sold at a price to be fixed by Titius. We have decided that in all such cases there is a sale conditionally on the price being fixed by the person named. But if he will not or cannot fix the price, there is no sale since there is no agreed price. The same principle may reasonably be extended to the contract of hire.

§ 454.

2. The price must consist in money. It was formerly a great

<sup>17a</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 285.

<sup>18</sup> The language of the Institutes, *sive in scriptis sive sine scriptis venditio celebrata est*, is confused and clumsy, but means the same as Cod. 4. 21. 17, 2, from which it is evidently taken, and refers not to the principal contract of sale, but to the collateral agreement for *arra* (*pactum arrale*).

question whether it could consist in some other thing, as a slave, a piece of land, or a toga Sabinus and Cassius think it may; and in accordance with this view it was commonly said that the contract of purchase and sale is effected by an exchange, and barter (it was said) was the most ancient kind of sale. An argument for this was found in the poet Homer, who in a certain passage describes the army of the Achaeans as getting wine by giving other things in exchange. The passage runs as follows: "So the long-haired Achaeans bought them wine, some for bronze and some for gleaming iron and some with hides and some with whole kine and some with captives" (*Iliad* VII, 472-5). The other school took the opposite view, and maintained that exchange was one thing, sale another. Otherwise it would be impossible to distinguish the thing sold from the price given for it, for reason does not allow us to say that each thing is at once the object of the sale and the price. So the opinion of Proculus, who said that exchange is a special contract distinct from sale, has very properly prevailed, since this was supported by another passage in Homer and by more weighty reasons besides. This was admitted by earlier Emperors and will be found treated at large in our Digest. 3 So soon as the contract of sale is concluded (which, as we have said, when there is no writing takes place as soon as the parties are agreed on the price) the risk of the thing sold immediately attaches to the purchaser, although the thing has not yet been delivered to him. Accordingly, if a slave has died, or has suffered some bodily injury, or if a house has been totally or partially consumed by fire, or land has been wholly or partially swept away by the violence of a stream, or has been seriously diminished in area or value from flood, or from trees being blown down by a high wind, the loss falls on the purchaser, who has to pay the price, though he does not get the thing. For the vendor incurs no responsibility for accidents which happen without wrongful intention or negligence on his part. Conversely, if, after the sale, land gains any accession by alluvion, the purchaser profits by it, for the person who incurs the risk should also take the profit. If a slave who has been sold, has run away or has been stolen without wrongful intention or negligence on the part of the vendor, we have to ask whether the vendor undertook to keep him safe until he delivered him to the purchaser. If he did, the risk is his. If he did not, he is not responsible. The same applies to animals and anything else. But the seller must put at the disposal of the buyer the right to vindicate the thing and to bring a personal action, for these remain with the seller by virtue of his ownership until the thing is handed over. The same may be said of the *actio furti* and the *actio damni injuriae* [under the *lex Aquilia*].

4 A sale may be conditional as well as absolute; for example, "If you approve the slave Stichus within such a time, you will be the purchaser for so many aurei."

5. If a person buys a sacred or religious place, or a public place such as a forum or a basilica knowing it to be such, there is no sale; § 452 but, if deceived by the vendor he has bought it as private or profane,

because he cannot have what he meant to buy he will have an action on the contract to recover as damages what it was worth to him, not to be deceived. It is the same if he has bought a free man, believing him to be a slave.

### VIII. HIRE

3. 24.

475. The second consensual contract is letting and hiring (*locatio conductio*), which may be defined as a contract, whereby one person agrees to give to another the use or the use and enjoyment of a thing or his services or his labour in return for remuneration, usually in money. This contract closely resembles sale. Like sale, it may be analysed into three elements, consent, subject-matter, remuneration.

476. CONSENT.—No form is needed. The contract being consensual does not depend for its validity upon the presence of the parties. It may be concluded by letter or by messenger. It is complete so soon as the parties are agreed upon its essential terms.

477. SUBJECT-MATTER.—The commentators distinguish (though the distinction is not sharply drawn in the texts of the Roman Law) three types of this contract :—

- (a) the hire of a thing (*locatio conductio rei*);
- (b) the hire of services (*locatio conductio operarum*);
- (c) the hire of a piece of work (*locatio conductio operis*).

In the first two cases the person who supplies the thing or the services is termed the locator, the person who pays is the conductor. In the third case the person who gives the order for the work, and pays for it, is the locator (he “places” the order), the person who executes the work, or gets it executed, is the conductor. This perplexed terminology is due to the different meanings attached to the word *locare* and its derivatives, and suggests that the contract of hire had outgrown its original limitations. It may be that in the earliest forms assumed by the contract there was always something “placed”. In (a) I place a thing at your disposal; in (b) I place myself or my slave or son at your disposal; in (c) I place in your hands something on which you are to expend your labour, e.g., goods to be carried, clothes to be washed or mended, material to construct a house, a slave or son to be taught a trade. In these cases the employer “places” not the work merely, but the material for doing the work. If the other party is to furnish the material, the contract is, usually, not hire, but sale (§ 483).

478. What from one point of view is placing of an order, from another point of view is the rendering of a service, and

it may be thought that *locatio operis* and *locatio operarum* are different ways of looking at the same thing. Thus if a contractor is to build for me a block of flats and supply all the materials at his own expense, I am said to place the order (*insulam aedificandam loco*) and the contractor is said to place his services (*locat operam*). This, says Paulus, makes the contract a contract of hire,<sup>19</sup> notwithstanding the fact that I become owner of the materials, which, as remarked above, would usually bring it under the head of sale. But it must not be concluded from this that a *locatio operis* is always a *conductio operarum*, for there is a substantial difference between serving for a wage and undertaking to do a piece of work as an independent contractor.<sup>20</sup>

479. Not all services could be the subject of a contract of hire. It was generally limited to services which were commonly rendered by slaves. Members of what are called the liberal professions were supposed to do their work for nothing. But they could recover an *honorarium* for their services by means of the *extraordinaria cognitio* of the magistrates (§ 739).

480. As regards the hiring of a thing, in principle there was no difference between a movable and an immovable. A lease of land did not create a real right. It was merely contractual. This was once so in English Law, but for many centuries a lease has been reckoned as an estate in the land. On the continent, the idea that a lease does not create a right in rem has persisted longer, and it seems that in French Law a leasehold interest is still regarded as a personal, not a real right,<sup>21</sup> though this does not carry the consequence, as in Roman Law, that the lessee can be ejected by a purchaser of the land.<sup>22</sup> In modern systems of law lessees can usually protect themselves against disturbance by taking steps to have their lease registered against the lessor's title. In South Africa leases in *longum tempus*, i.e., for ten years and upwards, require registration if they are to affect purchasers without notice.<sup>23</sup>

481. What has been said relates to ordinary leases of land,

<sup>19</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 22, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Dig. 50. 16. 5, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Amos & Walton, p. 104.

<sup>22</sup> C. C. 1743. From the middle ages onwards it was matter of controversy whether "sale breaks hire" or "hire goes before sale". The question was variously decided. To say that "hire goes before sale" does not necessarily mean that the lessee has a real right. It may give him security only against the lessor and persons claiming under him, not against third parties.

<sup>23</sup> Lee, p. 163.

which were usually of short duration, and in the case of agricultural tenancies did not exceed five years. But in *ager vectigalis*, and later under the name of *emphyteusis*, the Roman Law recognised a lease for a long term of years or in perpetuity. This has been described above (§ 242).

3. 24. 2. 482. REMUNERATION.—The third term in the contract of hire is the remuneration or rent (*merces*). This must consist in money, though it appears that this was at one time a disputed question as in the case of price in the contract of sale. It must be certain or ascertainable. It must be genuine.<sup>24</sup> It need not be fair (in the technical sense), *i.e.*, the rule of *laesio enormis* does not apply. Suppose the remuneration is to be fixed by a third person, is there a contract of hire? Yes, if he actually fixes the amount; no, if he does not. Suppose the amount is left to the discretion of one of the parties. Clearly there is no contract of hire, but there would be a right to compensation for services rendered, which could be enforced by the *actio praescriptis verbis* (§ 509). The rule that the remuneration must consist in money admitted of one exception. In the case of agricultural tenancies it might consist in a portion of the fruits, whether determined absolutely, *e.g.*, so much oil from an olive garden (*pars quanta*), or in a fixed proportion of the yearly yield (*pars quota*). A hiring of this kind was known as *colonia partiaria*.<sup>25</sup>
3. 24. 1. 483. In certain cases the dividing line between hire and other contracts was not easy to draw. Such were:—(a) *emphyteusis*, which resembled both hire and sale, and was finally decided to be neither, but a special contract governed by rules of its own (§ 242)<sup>26</sup>; (b) the case of the gladiators.<sup>27</sup> I supply you with gladiators on the terms that you are to pay me twenty denarii for each man who survives unharmed, and a thousand denarii for each man who is killed or maimed. This will be, as regards each man, a contract of hire or of sale, according to the event; (c) the case of the goldsmith. He is to make rings, supplying the material. It was ultimately decided that this was sale, not hire, nor, as Cassius held, sale of the materials and hire of the goldsmith's labour<sup>28</sup>; (d) the case of the fuller or tailor. Clothes are to be cleaned or mended. If the charge is fixed, the contract is hire. If the

<sup>24</sup> Dig. 41. 2. 10, 2: *quia conductio nulla est quae est in uno nummo*.

<sup>25</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 25, 6; Cod. 4. 65. 21; Girard, p. 605.

<sup>26</sup> G. 3. 145; Inst. 3. 24. 3.

<sup>27</sup> G. 3. 146.

<sup>28</sup> G. 3. 147; Inst. 3. 24. 4. Compare for English law, *Lee v. Griffin* (1861), 1 B. & S. 272; *Robinson v. Graves*, [1935] 1 K. B. 579.

man is to be paid for his services, but the amount is to be determined later by agreement, there is no contract of hire, but if the service has been rendered, he can recover the value of his services in the *actio praescriptis verbis* (§ 509). If he is to do the work for nothing (*quod raro accidit*) it is mandate.<sup>29</sup>

484. The duties of the letter of a thing (*locator rei*) were:—  
1. to procure to the hirer its use and enjoyment for the purpose contemplated by the contract; 2. to keep it in repair (except that the hirer was responsible for trifling repairs); 3. to compensate him for necessary and useful expenses.<sup>30</sup>

To the first head may be referred the letter's liability to deliver the thing free from defects. The extent of this liability varied with the circumstances. If I hire from you wine-vats, it is obvious that you must supply vats which do not leak. If you fail to do so, you have not supplied what I was entitled to get. Your ignorance of the defect is irrelevant. But if I take a lease from you of pasture lands, which produce poisonous herbs, you will be liable in damages if this was known (or should have been known) to you; otherwise I can only claim a remission of the rent.<sup>31</sup> The aedilician edict did not apply to the contract of hire,<sup>32</sup> but the letter's duty to supply a thing fit for its purpose had substantially the same effect.

The letter was not responsible for disturbance or eviction due to a cause which came into existence after the conclusion of the contract unless it was attributable to his own act. Thus he was not liable if land which he had given on lease was expropriated by public authority. But he must forgo his claim to rent.<sup>33</sup>

485. The duties of the hirer of a thing (*conductor rei*) were mainly:—1. to retain possession of the thing for the time agreed<sup>34</sup>; 2. to take proper care of it—thus, to keep agricultural land in proper cultivation,<sup>35</sup> not to overload a hired beast of burden; 3. to pay the agreed merces, subject to just ground of excuse.

<sup>29</sup> G. 3. 143; Inst. 3. 24. 1; 3. 26. 13; Dig. 19. 5. 22.

<sup>30</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 55, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 19, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Dig. 21. 1. 63.

<sup>33</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 33.

<sup>34</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 55, 2. Was the hirer bound to accept delivery and enter into possession, as stated by Girard (p. 608) and Buckland (T. p. 500)? No text says that he was. I learn on good authority that no such duty exists in French or in German Law. If, as has been thought, the contract was real before it was consensual, it may well have been the same in Roman Law.

<sup>35</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 25, 3; 30, 2.



486. Both parties were required to exercise *exacta diligentia*, in other words were answerable for *dolus* and *culpa levis in abstracto* (§ 403).<sup>36</sup>

487. In the case of hire of services the parties were bound, on the one hand to render, on the other hand to accept, the agreed services. Wages fell due *de die in diem*. Consequently an employee could claim no wages for time in which he was absent from illness. But it was otherwise if work was suspended by an entirely impersonal cause such as the flooding of a mine, though in this case employers sometimes excluded their liability for wages by a special term in the contract.<sup>37</sup>

488. Just as the hirer of services need not pay for services not rendered, so the hirer of land need not pay for land the use of which had not been enjoyed. Consequently, he was entitled to a remission of rent, if there was failure of crops due to storms of extraordinary violence, earthquake, flood, hostile incursion, or other causes falling under the general description of *vis major*.<sup>38</sup> But good years must be set off against bad, and if the landlord had remitted the rent and subsequent years were unusually productive, he might claim to be reimbursed.<sup>39</sup>

489. The contract of hire was determined:—1. by expiration of the agreed term, if any; otherwise at the will of either party. In the case of agricultural tenancies, if the tenant remained in possession after expiry of the term with consent, but without special agreement, there was an implied renewal (*tacita relocatio*) for one year. In other cases it seems that the hirer remaining in possession was required to pay merely for the actual period of use or enjoyment (*prout quisque habitaverit*)<sup>40</sup>; 2. by mutual consent; 3. by either party for just cause; thus *by the lessee*:—if the premises were not kept in adequate repair, or if he was otherwise prevented by the lessor or even by a third party from using the property as agreed (*e.g.*, Titius lets a house to Gaius. An adjoining proprietor builds so as to obscure his lights. Gaius may repudiate the contract)<sup>41</sup>; *by the lessor*:—if the lessee was wasting the property; or failed to pay the rent for two years; or if the lessor had urgent need of the property for his own use, or required possession in order to effect repairs; 4. by merger

<sup>36</sup> Inst. 3. 24. 5 (*conductor rei*); Dig. 19. 2. 24, 7 (*conductor operis*).

<sup>37</sup> Girard, p. 608, n. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 25, 6. *Vis major* (or *major casus*) means inevitable accident, *cui humana infirmitas resistere non potest*, Dig. 44. 7. 1, 4. *Casus fortuitus* and *damnum fatale* mean much the same.

<sup>39</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 15, 4; Cod. 4. 65. 8

<sup>40</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 13, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 25, 2.

of the titles of both parties in the same person; 5. by destruction of the subject-matter of the contract.

490. Actions. The locator had the *actio locati*, the conductor the *actio conducti*. The *interdictum Salvianum* and the *actio Serviana* were available to a landlord to secure his rent (§ 247).

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III

#### TITLE XXIV

##### *Of letting and hiring*

The contract of letting and hiring comes very near to purchase and sale and is governed by the same rules. For just as sale is concluded by an agreement as to the price, so hire implies an agreement as to the rent or remuneration. The letter has an action on the letting (*actio locati*); the hirer has an action on the hiring (*actio conducti*). § 475.

1. What was said above as to the ascertainment of the price in the contract of sale being left to a third party applies equally to the ascertainment of the remuneration in the contract of hire. Accordingly, if any one gives clothes to a fuller to be cleaned or attended to, or to a tailor for mending, and there is no agreement at the moment as to what is to be paid, but the sum is afterwards to be fixed by agreement, properly speaking there is no contract of hire, but the fuller or tailor will have the *actio praescriptis verbis*. § 509.

2. Again, just as the question was commonly raised whether there was a contract of sale, when things were to be given in exchange for things and not for money, so it was questioned whether there was a contract of hire, if, for example; someone gave you a thing for use or enjoyment and received from you some other thing for use or enjoyment. It is settled that this is not hire, but a contract of a special kind. For example, there are two neighbours. Each owns an ox. They agree each to lend his ox to the other for ten days for a certain work, and then one of the oxen dies while working for the man to whom it does not belong. An action does not lie on a contract of hire, nor on a contract of loan, for the lending (so to call it) was not gratuitous, but an action must be brought on the special circumstances of the case (*actio praescriptis verbis*). § 482.

3. Sale and hire are so closely allied that sometimes it is a question whether a contract is one or the other. For example, when land is given to be enjoyed in perpetuity, that is to say on the terms that so long as the rent is paid to the owner of the soil, he may not reclaim the land from the lessee or his heir, or from any one to whom the lessee or his heir may have transferred the land by way of sale, gift, constitution of a *dos*, or by any other title. The old lawyers doubted whether a contract of this nature was hire or sale, some taking one view, some the other. Consequently, Zeno's constitution was enacted, which decided that the contract of emphy- § 242.

teusis was a thing apart, not to be referred either to hire or to sale, but resting upon its own special terms. If the parties came to any special arrangement this was to be regarded as an essential part of the contract. If there was no express agreement as to risk, then the risk of total destruction was to be with the owner of the soil, the risk of partial destruction with the emphyteutic tenant. This is still law.

§ 483

4. Again, the question was raised—if Titius agrees with a goldsmith that he is to make rings of a certain weight and a certain pattern out of his own gold and is to receive, say ten aurei, is this sale or hire? Cassius said that it was sale of the material, and hire of the goldsmith's labour. But it is decided that it is sale and sale only. If Titius furnishes the gold, and the goldsmith is to do the work for an agreed reward, the contract is undoubtedly hire.

§ 403

5. The hirer must observe in all respects the terms of the hiring and, if anything is not provided for, he must do what is right and fair in the circumstances. If a person has paid or promised to pay a sum for the use of clothes, or plate, or a beast of burden, he is required to take the same care of it as a very careful father of a family applies to his own affairs. If he does this and has lost the thing by accident, he will not be liable for failing to restore it.

6. If the hirer dies while the period of the hire is still running his heir succeeds to the contract on the same terms.

## IX. PARTNERSHIP (SOCIETAS)

491. Partnership is "a contract for reciprocal performances directed to a common purpose" (Sohm)—"It was essentially the union of funds, skill or labour, or a combination of them, for a common purpose, which often had, but need not have, profit for its aim" (Buckland).

492. The following kinds of partnership are distinguished:—<sup>42</sup>

1. universal partnership (*societas universorum bonorum*). This, no doubt, grew out of the ancient institution of consortium, which was the name given to the relation between sui heredes holding together after the death of the paterfamilias (§ 498). But in later times universal partnership existed only by agreement. Perhaps Ulpian had this type of partnership in view when he said that partnership is a relation of brotherhood <sup>43</sup>;

2. partnership in all business transactions (*societas universorum quae ex quaestu veniunt*);

3. partnership in a particular business (*societas alicujus negotiationis*);

4. partnership in farming the revenues (*societas vectiga-*

<sup>42</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 5 pr.; 7; Inst. 3. 25 pr.

<sup>43</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 63 pr. cum societas jus quodammodo fraternitatis in se habeat.

lium). This was a variety of the last, but governed in some respects by special rules.

5. partnership in a thing or a particular transaction (*societas unius rei*). Partnership in a thing is not easily distinguished from co-ownership. It was a question of intention. If the parties intended to create the partnership relation, there was partnership, otherwise not. A case is put in the Digest of a joint purchase by neighbours of a site adjoining their houses to prevent interference with the access of light.<sup>44</sup> This constituted a partnership relation. In another case there was a partnership, but it was doubtful whether it was in a thing or in a transaction. You have three horses and I one, and we enter into a partnership on the terms that you shall take my horse, sell the whole team of four and give me a quarter of the price received. According to Celsus it is a question of construction whether there is a partnership in the horses before sale or only in the selling of them (as he held to be the case). On the second hypothesis, my horse having died before sale, the partnership fails to take effect and I have no claim to any share in the price realised by the sale of your horses. On the other hypothesis the death of my horse is a partnership loss and the three remaining horses are sold for partnership account.<sup>45</sup>

#### 493. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN THE CONTRACT.

1. A contribution by each of the partners. The contribution need not be equal or similar. One partner may contribute his capital, another his industry, for one man's services may be worth as much as another man's money. But each must contribute something. 3. 25. 2.

2. A common interest. Each partner must be entitled to some (not necessarily an equal) advantage. The shares in profit and loss may be fixed by agreement; failing which, they are deemed to be equal. If the share in profits is fixed, but not in losses, or conversely, the share in the one is taken to be the same as in the other. An agreement that a partner should have a larger share in profits than in losses was good, and it might even be agreed that a partner should share in profits and not in losses. But a contract that one should share in losses but not in profits was a lion and jackal arrangement, which was not permitted (*leonina societas*).<sup>46</sup> 3. 25. 1. 3. 25. 3. 3. 25. 2.

3. The intention to form a partnership (*affectio societatis*).

<sup>44</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 52, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 58 pr.

<sup>46</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 29, 2.

This was sometimes the only thing to distinguish partnership from joint ownership.<sup>47</sup>

4. A lawful object.<sup>48</sup>

494. DUTIES OF THE PARTNERS INTER SE.—Partners are bound reciprocally:—

1. each to contribute his share as agreed;

2. to share profits and losses as agreed;

3. each to indemnify the other *pro rata* against all expenses and liabilities properly incurred on behalf of the partnership;

3. 25. 9 4. in all partnership business to exhibit the *diligentia quam suis rebus*. So the law was settled, perhaps by Justinian, though the words of the Institutes repeat a passage in the Digest attributed to Gaius.<sup>49</sup> The actual functions of each partner in the business were in each case matter of arrangement.

495. HOW PARTNERSHIP IS DETERMINED.—Ulpian says that partnership is dissolved<sup>50</sup>:—1. by events connected with the person (*ex personis*); 2. by events connected with the subject-matter (*ex rebus*); 3. by an act of the will (*ex voluntate*); 4. by a juridical act (*ex actione*). Expanding this summary we may say that a partnership is determined:—

3. 25. 5 (a) by any change in the persons composing the group, particularly by the death of one of the partners; or if one of the partners incurred a forfeiture of the whole of his estate (*publicatio*), or, becoming insolvent, made a cession of his goods to his creditors (*cessio bonorum*).

Gaius notes that, “partnership is said to be dissolved by *capitis deminutio*”,<sup>51</sup> which suggests a doubt. In Justinian’s law *capitis deminutio* had no effect except in the case of *c.d. maxima*, which involved forfeiture of goods. It is not mentioned in the Institutes amongst the causes of dissolution.

When it is said that death dissolves the partnership, what is meant is that it does not continue between the surviving partners nor between them and the heirs of a deceased partner even if it has been agreed *ab initio* that this should be so. An exception was admitted in the case of a *societas vectigalium*.<sup>52</sup> But the death of a partner did not put an end to the partnership until the other partners had knowledge of it,<sup>53</sup> and until an unfinished business was brought to completion the heir of a deceased partner was expected to

<sup>47</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 31.

<sup>48</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 57.

<sup>49</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 72.

<sup>50</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 63, 10.

<sup>51</sup> G. 3. 153.

<sup>52</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 59 pr.

<sup>53</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 65, 10.

exhibit the same diligence as a socius, and succeeded to the rights and duties of the deceased, so that he might be a party as plaintiff or defendant in an *actio pro socio* (§ 496). It might be agreed *ab initio* that if one partner died the survivors should remain in partnership, but this was a new partnership, not a subsistence of the old one;<sup>54</sup>

(b) when the object of the partnership has been accomplished or becomes impossible of realisation, or when the partnership capital is exhausted; 3. 25. 6

(c) by the will of the partners or any one of them (*renuntiatio*), or by the arrival of the date, or the happening of the event, fixed in advance for the determination of the partnership. A partner might at any time renounce the partnership; either expressly, or tacitly as by selling his share in the partnership property. But, if he renounced unreasonably in breach of an agreement that the partnership was to continue for a certain time, he exposed himself to an *actio pro socio*. If he renounced with the fraudulent design of getting a benefit for himself, *e.g.*, if one of the partners in a universal partnership renounced in anticipation of an inheritance coming to him with the design of keeping it to himself, he was obliged to share it, if profitable, with the other partners. If it proved a source of loss, he had to bear the loss himself. As Cassius puts it, he freed his partners from himself, but not himself from his partners<sup>55</sup>; 3. 25. 4.

(d) by bringing an action for the liquidation of the partnership. This was equivalent to renunciation. Paulus using the word *actio* "in its widest sense to denote any juristic act" refers to the same head a stipulation<sup>56</sup> changing the character of the partnership (changing the terms or the parties). This would effect a novation, and might have been referred to the head of renunciation.

496. The *actio pro socio* lay to enforce the duties of the partners *inter se*, and, in particular, for an account. Condemnation involved *infamia*. On the other hand a defendant might plead the *beneficium competentiae*.<sup>57</sup> Since partners were usually joint owners, they had also the *actio communi dividundo* for division of the common property and adjudication. 4 16. 2. 4 6. 38.

<sup>54</sup> Inst. 3. 25. 5; Dig. 17. 2. 65, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 65, 3.

<sup>56</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 65 pr.; Buckl. T. p. 512.

<sup>57</sup> Dig. 17. 2. 63 pr.

## 497. THE GENERAL ASPECTS OF PARTNERSHIP IN ROMAN LAW.

1. A *societas* was not generally a juristic person, but the great partnerships formed to undertake public works or to farm the revenues (*societates publicanorum*) were or might be so.<sup>58</sup>

2. By English Law (Partnership Act, 1890, sec. 5) "Every partner is an agent of the firm and his other partners for the purpose of the business of the partnership". In Roman Law this was not so. One partner had no implied authority to bind the others even in matters strictly within the business of the partnership. But the other partners might be liable:— (a) if they had made the partner their agent or ratified his action; (b) if he contracted in the name of the partnership and they had been benefited. If he contracted in his own name and on his own account they would not in any case be liable to third parties.<sup>59</sup>

3. In English Law partnership is defined (P. A., sec. 1 (1)) as, "the relation which subsists between persons carrying on a business in common with a view of profit". A view of profit is not essential to the Roman conception of partnership.

4. In English Law, subject to any agreement between the parties, every partnership is dissolved as between all the parties by the death of any partner (P. A., sec. 33 (1)). In Roman Law no such agreement was permitted in ordinary partnerships.

498. APPENDIX.—Fresh and unsuspected light has been thrown upon the ancient institution of consortium by the fragments of Gaius discovered in Egypt and published in 1933.<sup>60</sup> The opening words of the fragment relating to *societas* coincide with the concluding words of Gaius III, 154 in the Verona palimpsest. What follows (154a; 154b) is new matter not found in the Verona text. The passage runs as follows:—

154. The partnership of which we are speaking, namely, that which is contracted by mere consent, is *iuris gentium*, and so it exists amongst all men by natural reason.

154a. But there is another kind of partnership peculiar to Roman citizens. For, anciently, on the death of the *paterfamilias*, there was a partnership between *sui heredes* which was statutory and at the same time natural (*legitima simul et naturalis*), which was called *ercto non cito*, that is, partnership with undivided dominium. The word *erctum* means dominium, from which we get *erus* meaning dominus. The word *ciere* means to divide, whence we say *cedere* [? *caedere*] and *secare*.

<sup>58</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 298.

<sup>59</sup> Moyle, p. 44b

<sup>60</sup> The text with translation and notes by Prof. de Zulueta under the title *Supplements to the Institutes of Gaius* was published by the Clarendon Press in 1935.

154b. Others too who wanted to have this partnership could accomplish their object before the praetor by a certain *legis actio*. In this partnership of brothers and of others who contracted a partnership after the model of brother co-heirs, there was this peculiarity that any one of the partners by manumitting a slave owned in common, made him free and acquired a freedman (*i.e.*, rights of patronage) for all the co-owners; and, similarly, by mancipating . . .

Here the fragment ends. It confirms the view that the earliest form of partnership arose by operation of law, when *sui heredes* held together in a joint family without dividing the estate. A voluntary association of the same kind might be brought into existence by means of a *legis actio*, possibly a fictitious allegation of co-heirship. It has been maintained that the explanation given in the text of the ancient phrase *ercto non cito* is wrong, since (it is said) the idea of division is contained in the word *ercto*, as appears from the *judicium familiae erciscundae*—the action for division of the estate. On this hypothesis the phrase means, “division not being put in motion”, or, “promoted” (*cito* from *ciere* = to put in motion). But it is more likely that Gaius is right. *Erctum* means property. The *judicium familiae erciscundae* is the action for appropriation of shares in the estate.

G. 2. 219

The word “*cito*” in the combination “*ercto non cito*” is not the past participle of the classical verb *ciere*, for it is *cito*, not *cito* (*Servius ad Aen. VIII. 642*; *Bruns. ii. 79*). It may well belong to a forgotten verb meaning “cut” or “divide”. Perhaps the *judicium familiae erciscundae* got its name from *ercti ciendi*, which, being read as one word, suggested a fictitious verb *ercisci*, unknown except in this connection.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III

#### TITLE XXV

##### *Of partnership*

A partnership may relate either to all the goods of the partners § 492. or to a particular business, for example the purchase and sale of slaves, or of oil, wine or grain. 1. If there is no express agreement as to the proportion in which the partners are to share in profit and § 493. loss, the shares in each are understood to be equal. Any express agreement must be respected; for there has never been any doubt as to the validity of an agreement that one partner should share in profit and loss to the extent of two thirds, the other to the extent of one third.

2. But the question was raised whether an agreement could be



upheld by which, for example, Titius is to have two thirds of the profit and bear one third of the loss, while Seius is to bear two thirds of the loss and take one third of the profit. Quintus Mucius thought that such an agreement was contrary to the nature of partnership and therefore could not be approved. Servius Sulpicius took the opposite view, and this has prevailed, for it often happens that a man's services are so valuable to the partnership that it is fair that he should be accepted as a partner on more advantageous terms. Indeed, there is no doubt that a partnership may be concluded on the terms that one partner is to make a contribution in money and the other is not to do so, and yet profits are to be shared equally, for a man's services are often equivalent to money. Accordingly, against the opinion of Quintus Mucius and in accordance with the view entertained by Servius consistently with his principle, it is established that a partnership may be constituted on the terms that one of the partners shall share in profit but not be liable for loss. This must be understood in the sense that if one transaction proves profitable, another the reverse, a balance is to be struck, and the net gain (if any) is to be regarded as profit. 3. It is clear that if the shares are expressed in respect of profit only or of loss only, nothing being provided for the opposite event, the shares will be the same in the one case as in the other. 4. Partnership continues so long as the partners remain of the same mind, but as soon as any one partner renounces the partnership it is dissolved. Of course, if any one renounces the partnership with the cunning design of keeping to himself some anticipated gain, for example, if there is a universal partnership, and one of the partners, being instituted heir, renounces with the purpose of enjoying the inheritance alone, he is obliged to share the gain with the others. But if he acquires any other gain without such fraudulent design, it goes to him alone and, similarly, the partner to whom the renunciation is made keeps for himself anything acquired after the renunciation.

§ 495

5. Again, the death of any partner dissolves the partnership [and his heir does not take his place], for when a man enters into a partnership, he selects a particular person to be his partner. If several persons have agreed to form a partnership, the death of any one of them dissolves it, though there may be several survivors, unless there was an agreement to the contrary when the partnership was formed. 6. If a partnership is formed for a specific purpose it comes to an end when the business is accomplished.

7. It is evident that forfeiture of goods puts an end to a partnership, that is to say, if the whole estate of one of the partners is forfeited, for, since the *fiscus* takes his place, he is considered to be civilly dead.

8. If one of the partners finding his circumstances embarrassed has made cession of his goods and his estate is sold to satisfy his public or private debts the partnership is dissolved. But, in this case, if all agree to remain in partnership, a new partnership is deemed to be formed.

9. It was formerly a question whether in the *actio pro socio* a partner was answerable for *dolus* merely, like the depositary, or also for *culpa*, that is for slackness and negligence, and this second view has prevailed. But negligence is not to be measured by the standard of most exact diligence. It is enough for a partner to apply to partnership business as much care as he exhibits in his own concerns. If a man takes to himself a careless partner, he must blame himself and no one else. § 494.

## X. MANDATE (MANDATUM)

499. Mandate is a contract whereby one person (mandator) gives another (mandatarius) a commission to do something for him without reward, and the other accepts the commission. It is imperfectly bilateral (§ 394), because, though it may give rise to reciprocal rights and duties, the duty of the mandatarius arises immediately upon the acceptance of the commission, while the duty of the mandator, *viz.* to indemnify the mandatarius against loss and liability, is merely contingent.

500. **ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS.**—1. The object of the contract must be lawful. It may consist either in general management (*procuratio omnium bonorum*) or in the doing of a specific act (*procuratio unius rei*). It may, but does not necessarily, imply entering into legal relations with a third party. 3. 26. 7.

2. The mandator (it is said) must have an interest in the thing to be done by the mandatarius.<sup>61</sup> I may give a mandate in the interest of (a) myself alone (*mea gratia*); (b) myself and you (*mea et tua gratia*); (c) myself and a third party (*mea et aliena gratia*); (d) a third party alone (*aliena gratia*<sup>62a</sup>); (e) you and a third party (*tua et aliena gratia*); (f) you alone (*tua gratia*). If the requirement of interest is strictly construed, the first three constitute a mandate properly so called, the last three not. But some mandates which were not directly in the interest of the mandator came to be upheld as a valid contract because by giving a mandate *aliena gratia* or *tua et aliena gratia* I placed myself as regards the third party in the position of a *negotiorum gestor* (§ 569), and as such acquired a personal liability and consequent interest in the execution of the mandate; and, further, if you do an act at my instance and suffer loss in consequence you are held to be entitled to an indemnity because, if left to yourself, you might not have acted as you did. Such was the opinion of Sabinus in the case of my having given you a mandate to lend money at interest to Titius—*quia non aliter Titio credidisses quam si* 3 26 pr.

<sup>61</sup> Dig. 17. 1. 8, 6.

<sup>62a</sup> Dig. 17. 1. 2.

tibi mandatum esset. This introduces into the law a new principle. The binding character of the mandate is no longer based upon the interest which the mandator has in its execution, but upon the detriment to the mandatarius in changing his position at the mandator's instance. In fact, so far was a mandate of this character from being invalid that under the name of *mandatum credendae pecuniae* or, as the commentators call it, *mandatum qualificatum* (§ 558), it became a common method of creating the relation of principal and surety. There is a passage in the Digest in which Ulpian is made to apply the same reasoning to any *mandatum tua gratia*, but it is clearly interpolated.<sup>62</sup> It marks, however, in the law of Justinian a complete abandonment of the rule that a mandator must have an interest in the subject of the mandate; though, even so, it remained important to distinguish mandate from mere advice, which, however unfortunate for the person who acted upon it, did not entitle him to claim an indemnity from the person who gave it.

3. 26. 13      3. The mandate must be gratuitous. This rule, like the last, did not persist in practice, or was matter of form rather than of substance. If a reward was agreed upon, and the affair was capable of falling under the contract of hire (§ 479), the contract would be *locatio conductio*. In other cases an agreed remuneration (*honorarium—salarium*) could be recovered by means of the extra-ordinary jurisdiction of the magistrate (§ 739).

501. DUTIES OF THE PARTIES.—The mandatarius was bound :—1. to execute the mandate, subject to the right of renouncing it *re adhuc integra*, *i.e.*, while he can do so without prejudice to the mandator and subject to just excuse for failure to renounce at all, or in good time; 2. not to exceed the mandate; 3. to exercise *exacta diligentia*.<sup>63</sup> In the classical law he was liable only for *dolus*<sup>64</sup>; 4. to render accounts; 5. to make over to the mandator all benefits accruing from the mandate including rights of action against third parties.

3. 26. 11.

3. 26. 8

502. The duties of the mandator were principally :—1. to indemnify the mandatarius against expense, loss and liability incurred in the execution of the mandate<sup>65</sup>; 2. not to revoke the mandate to his prejudice.

503. Mandate may be determined :—

(a) by mutual consent, *viz.*, either by arranging in

<sup>62</sup> Dig. 17. 1. 6, 5; Girard, p. 620, n. 5.

<sup>63</sup> Cod. 4. 35. 13.

<sup>64</sup> Modestinus in *Coll.* 10. 2. 3      <sup>65</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 62 (61), 5.

advance for the termination of the mandate after a certain time or in a certain event; or by subsequent agreement;

(b) by unilateral revocation or renunciation, but not without liability unless made *re integra*, viz., by the mandator before the mandatarius has done anything in execution of his commission; by the mandatarius, so that by renouncing he does not put the mandator in a position in which he cannot conveniently do the thing himself or get some one else to do it for him;

3. 26. 9  
& 11.

(c) by the death of either party. But if the mandatarius has proceeded to act, or continued to act, in ignorance of the mandator's death he is entitled to be indemnified by the heirs; conversely, the heirs of the mandatarius are bound to take necessary steps to wind up the business in hand.<sup>66</sup>

3. 26. 10.

The texts of the Digest leave some uncertainty as to the effect of a mandate to do something after the death of the mandator (*mandatum post mortem*), e.g. a mandate to my debtor to pay such a person after my death, a mandate to see to my funeral or to raise a monument to my memory. Such a mandate was exposed to two objections, first, that a mandate is determined by death; secondly, that an obligation could not begin in the person of the heir. But in some cases such mandates are stated to be valid, and in Justinian's system they were free from objection, the second of the above rules having been formally abolished.<sup>67</sup>

The death of the mandatarius always determined the mandate except to the limited extent above mentioned.

504. Actions. The mandator had the *actio mandati directa*, the mandatarius the *actio mandati contraria*. Condemnation in the direct action involved *infamia*. There was besides the *extraordinaria cognitio* for remuneration.

4. 6. 28.

505. MANDATE AND AGENCY.—We are apt to think of *mandatum* in terms of agency, and the word agency is sometimes employed to translate the word *mandatum*. But this is incorrect. In the law of contract agency implies a contractual relation established between one person termed the principal and a third party by another person termed the agent, who acts as intermediary. In English Law, at least, the topic "Principal and Agent" is mainly concerned with this relation, though also with the relation of Principal and Agent *inter se*. But mandate is essentially a contract of employment and its rules are concerned only with the reciprocal

<sup>66</sup> There is no text, but no doubt it was so as in partnership. Dig. 17. 2. 40.

<sup>67</sup> Buckl. T. p. 517: M. p. 301.

rights and duties of the mandator on the one hand and the mandatarius on the other. It is true that the contract of mandate played a part in other branches of the law, and contributed in an important degree to their development. These are:—

- (a) The Law of Agency (as above defined);
- (b) Suretyship;
- (c) Assignment of Obligations.

But the employment of the contract of mandate in these several spheres is best reserved for future consideration as occasion arises.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III

#### TITLE XXVI

##### *Of mandate*

§ 500

There are five modes of mandate. A man may give you a mandate for his own benefit alone, for his and yours, for a third party's alone, for his and a third party's, for yours and a third party's. If you are given a mandate in your own interest alone, it is an empty mandate, and gives rise to no obligation or action of mandate between you two. 1. A mandate is solely in the interest of the mandator when, for example, a man gives you a mandate to look after his affairs, to buy a property for him, or to be his surety. 2. A mandate is in the interest of yourself and of the mandator, when, for example, a man gives you a mandate to lend money at interest to some one who is borrowing the money in connection with the mandator's business; or if when you are about to proceed against him in a matter in which he has gone surety, he gives you a mandate to proceed instead against the principal debtor at his risk, or, at his risk to stipulate from a person whom he delegates to you for payment of what was due to you from himself. 3. There is a mandate in the interest of a third person alone if, for example, you are given a mandate to manage the affairs of Titius, or to buy a property for Titius, or to go surety for Titius. 4. A mandate is in the interest of the mandator and a third person if, for example, some one gives you a mandate to manage affairs in which he and Titius are jointly interested, or to buy property for himself and Titius, or to go surety for himself and Titius.

5. A mandate is in the interest of yourself and a third person, if you are given a mandate to lend money at interest to Titius. But a mandate to lend free of interest is a mandate in the interest of a third person alone. 6. A mandate is given in your interest alone if for example some one gives you a mandate to invest your money in the purchase of land rather than to lend it at interest, or conversely. But a mandate of this kind is rather advice than mandate. and,

therefore, creates no obligation, for no one is liable to an action on mandate for giving mere advice, even though the advice does not turn out well for the person to whom it is given, for any one may form his own opinion as to the value of the advice given. Accordingly, if you have money lying idle and some one advises you to buy something with it, or to lend it, he is not liable to you on a mandate, even though the affair has not been to your advantage. This is so far the case, that it was a question whether a person was liable on a mandate, if he gave you a mandate to lend money at interest to Titius. Sabinus held that such a mandate was binding, because but for the mandate you would not have let Titius have the money and this view has prevailed. 7. A mandate creates no obligation if it is contrary to good morals, for example if Titius gives you a mandate to commit a delict, for, even though you incur a penalty in consequence, you have no action against Titius.

8. A mandatary must not go beyond the terms of his mandate. § 501. For example, if you have a mandate to buy or to go surety up to one hundred aurei, you must not buy for more, or go surety to a greater amount. Otherwise you have no action of mandate. Sabinus and Cassius went so far as to say that you cannot maintain an action even to the extent of the hundred. The other school took the opposite view and this is certainly the kinder solution. If you buy for less you will, of course, have your action, for a mandate to buy for a hundred implies a mandate to buy for less, if possible.

9. A valid mandate ceases to exist if it is revoked before the mandatary has acted upon it. § 503.

10. Again, the death of either party in similar circumstances<sup>68</sup> puts an end to the mandate. But from motives of convenience it is settled that if, in ignorance of the mandator's death, you have carried out the mandate, you have your action on the contract; otherwise you would be prejudiced by an excusable ignorance. Similarly, if persons who owe money to Titius pay his steward not knowing that he has been manumitted, they are discharged from the debt, though in strict law they could not be discharged, since they have paid some one to whom payment should not have been made.

11. No one is obliged to accept a mandate; but if a mandate is accepted it must be executed or renounced at the earliest possible moment, so as to give the mandator the opportunity of doing the thing himself, or getting some one else to do it for him. If this opportunity is not afforded him while things remain as they were, he will have his action on the mandate, unless the mandatary had good reason for not renouncing, or for not renouncing in time.

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<sup>68</sup> *in integro mandato*. This means the same as *dum integra res sit* (sec. 9). Death dissolves the mandate in any event—*mandatum solvitur morte*, Dig. 17. 1. 26 pr.; but (and this is why the qualifying words are introduced) without prejudice to outstanding obligations. Julianus quoque scripsit mandatoris morte solvi mandatum, sed obligationem aliquando durare. *Ibid.*

12. A mandate may be expressed to take effect from a future date or subject to a condition.

§ 500.

13. Finally, it must be remarked that if a mandate is not gratuitous it must be referred to some other type of contract. Thus, if the service is to be remunerated, it is a contract of hire; and it may be stated as a general principle that where in the absence of remuneration there is a contract of mandate or deposit, if there is agreement for remuneration there is a contract of hire. Therefore, if you give clothes to a fuller to be cleaned or attended to or to a tailor for mending, and there is no present agreement for remuneration or promise to fix it at a future date, an action of mandate is available.

506. We have now passed in review the "named contracts", real, verbal, literal and consensual. Before going on to consider some other types of actionable agreement a few words may be devoted to two institutions which find no place in Justinian's scheme—*nexum* and *fiducia*.

507. *NEXUM*.—This goes back to a remote antiquity. In the early days of the Republic debtors used to bind themselves by a process *per aes et libram* resembling mancipation, which reduced them either (as some think) immediately (self-mancipation) or (as some think) on failure to repay (contract) to a position little better than slavery.<sup>69</sup> This state of things was ended by a *lex Poetelia* of B.C. 326 or some years later, which is described by Livy as follows:—

"The consuls were ordered to bring before the people a measure providing that no one save one who had incurred a *nox*a (committed a guilty act)<sup>70</sup> should be kept fettered or bound until he discharged the penalty; that the debtor's property, not his person, should be liable for a money loan. So the bondsmen were set free and it was enacted that in future none should be bound."<sup>71</sup>

The subsequent history of this obscure institution is unknown. The contrary process of formal discharge *per aes et libram* is described by Gaius as existing (§ 641), but it must not be inferred from this that *nexum* was not already obsolete.

508. *FIDUCIA* (TRUST).—We have met with this above in various connections (§§ 112, 118, 245). Here it will be useful to recall the passage in which Gaius mentions it in speaking of *usucapion*. This is what he says:—

<sup>69</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 259.

<sup>70</sup> *Nisi qui noxam meruisset.*

<sup>71</sup> Livy, VIII, 28.

Lib. II, 59. There are other cases besides in which a man usucapes a thing which he knows does not belong to him. If a person has given a thing in trust (*fiduciae causa*) by mancipation or in *jure cessio*, and has come into possession of it, he can usucap it in one year, even though it be an immovable. This kind of usucapion is called *usureception*, because we recover by usucapion what once was ours. 60. But since a trust is contracted either with a creditor by right of pledge, or with a friend that our things may be safer in his keeping, if it is contracted with a friend *usureception* takes place in any event; if with a creditor always if the money is paid, but before payment only if the debtor has not hired the thing from the creditor or asked to have it on sufferance. If he has obtained possession in any other way lucrative usucapion is allowed (§ 163).

This passage gives the clue to the nature of *fiducia*. At a time when the distinction between possession and ownership was not yet sharply drawn transactions which later assumed the character of the real contracts *pignus* and *depositum* (and by inference *commodatum* as well) were effected by a transfer of ownership by one or other of the old civil law methods of *mancipatio* or in *jure cessio*; the acquirer on his part giving an undertaking (*pactum conventum*) to retransfer the ownership on payment or (as the case might be) on demand. Meanwhile the original owner easily recovered ownership by usucapion. The duty to reconvey was made good by the *actio fiduciae*, which was a *bonae fidei judicium* and relatively late.<sup>72</sup> The other party had a *contraria actio* for any claim for expenses, etc., which he might have against the original owner.<sup>73</sup>

*Fiducia* does not occur except as an incident of the conveyance of a person or a thing. It is a parasitic institution and was not looked upon as a contract. In the classical age it was still in common use to constitute a pledge.

## XI. INNOMINATE CONTRACTS

509. There were cases in which there seemed to be undoubtedly a contract, but it was difficult to determine the precise juristic nature of the transaction in question. It might, for example, be on the border-line between sale and hire, or within the limits of the contract of hire it might be doubtful whether it was *conductio rei* or *locatio operis*

<sup>72</sup> G. 4. 62. But it is at least as old as Q. Mucius Scaevola (fl. 100 B.C. § 11), who includes *fiducia* in his list of *bonae fidei judicia*. Cic. *de Off.* 3. 17. 70.

<sup>73</sup> Buckl. *M.* pp. 260, 261.



(§ 477). In a case of this kind Labeo held that an action could be brought upon the facts (*civilem actionem in factum esse dandam Labeo scribit*),<sup>74</sup> and the principle was applied in other similarly ambiguous cases. Ultimately, the action was extended beyond its original scope to include cases which clearly did not conform to any existing type of contract.<sup>75</sup> It was the practice to insert at the beginning of the formula a statement of fact (*praescripta verba*).<sup>76</sup> The plaintiff was said *praescriptis verbis agere*. This action, variously described as *actio civilis incerti*, *actio civilis in factum* and (ultimately) *actio praescriptis verbis*, came to be available wherever there was an agreement for reciprocal performances, not referable to one of the recognised types of consensual contract, and one party had done his part, while the other had not. It was an action brought, as an English lawyer would say, upon an executed consideration. Transactions of this kind are commonly described as innominate real contracts. They are innominate, because they do not fall within the definition of any of the recognised and named contracts,<sup>77</sup> though in fact, as will be seen, they are sometimes distinguished by appropriate names. They are real, because, as in the case of the real contracts, it is the fact that something has been done on one side that gives rise to the liability on the other. But, whereas in the case of the real contracts proper, this doing consists in the handing over of a *res*, to be returned in kind or in specie, in the case of the innominate contracts one party has done what he had undertaken to do in terms of an antecedent agreement. It is said that there is no true analogy between the two cases, and it is, perhaps, preferable to omit the word "real" from the description, and to speak merely of "innominate contracts".<sup>78</sup>

510. There were many transactions of this kind, some so frequent as to be distinguished by particular names (though not, therefore, technically "named" contracts). Thus—to mention first, the case of exchange (*permutatio*)—if I agree to give you my ox in exchange for your horse, there is no obligation, because exchange is not a consensual contract, but, if in execution of the agreement I have given you my ox, I shall have an action against you if you fail to give me your horse. In the alternative I can reclaim my ox by a

<sup>74</sup> Dig. 19. 5. 1, 1.

<sup>75</sup> Girard, p. 625.

<sup>76</sup> Cod. 2. 4. 6, 1: *utilis actio quae praescriptis verbis rem gestam demonstrat*.

<sup>77</sup> Dig. 2. 14. 7; 19. 5. 1 pr.

<sup>78</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 521; *M.* p. 303.

condictio. To ground my action on the contract, it is necessary that I should have made you owner of the ox, for it is not sufficient, as in sale, merely to give quiet possession. Another frequent case was the bargain known as *aestimatum*, which gave rise to an action known specifically as the *actio aestimatoria*, and was of sufficient importance to be the subject of a special chapter in the Edict. This is a bargain, admitting of variations, by which I deliver goods to you on the terms that you are to sell them for what they will fetch, and pay me an agreed price. If you do not sell them I am to have them back. If you sell them, as you expect to do, for more than the agreed price you keep the difference. This case falls under the head of the earlier type of ambiguous transactions. Ulpian says that it was a great question whether it was sale, or *locatio operis*, or *conductio operarum*, or mandate, and consequently it seemed best (to the praetor) to make it the subject of a special action.<sup>79</sup> Another case was *precarium*, which was "a gratuitous grant of enjoyment of land or goods, revocable at will".<sup>80</sup> This gave rise not only to the interdict *de precario* for the recovery of the property from the *precario accipiens* but also (under Justinian) to the *actio praescriptis verbis*. Yet another case was *transactio* or compromise, in which the performance which grounds the action was the renunciation of a contested claim. Many other cases may be supposed in which something has been given or done on one side on the terms that something is to be given or done (or not done) on the other. A formula attributed to Paulus covers most, but not all, of these cases. *Aut enim do tibi ut des, aut do ut facias, aut facio ut des, aut facio ut facias*<sup>81</sup>—"Either I give you that you may give, or I give that you may do, or I do that you may give, or I do that you may do". As it happens, *aestimatum*, perhaps the first agreement of the kind to receive legal recognition, does not exactly conform to any one of these four types.<sup>82</sup> It exhibits, however, the feature which is common to all these cases, something done or given on one side giving rise to a duty on the other.

## XII. PACTS

511. An agreement which did not conform to any type of contract, nominate or innominate, was termed a "pact" or a

<sup>79</sup> Dig. 19. 3. 1. In another text Ulpian says that it might be partnership. Dig. 17. 2. 44.

<sup>80</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 524; *M.* p. 305. But like what we call a long loan it might be practically as good as ownership.

<sup>81</sup> Dig. 19. 5. 5 pr.

<sup>82</sup> Girard, p. 627.

## XIII. UNILATERAL DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION

515. The contracts and pacts of which we have spoken have the common quality of being agreements—*duorum pluriumve in idem placitum consensus*<sup>90</sup>—*duorum consensus atque conventio*.<sup>91</sup> There were two institutions, each of limited application, which were unilateral expressions of intention and sources of obligation—*votum* and *pollicitatio*.

516. *VOTUM*.—This was a vow made to a god. Ulpian in the Digest says: "If a person has vowed a thing, he is bound by his vow." *Patresfamilias*, that is persons *sui juris* of the male sex, could so bind themselves and so could sons and slaves in power by the authority of father or master. The obligation was transmitted to heirs.<sup>92</sup> Nothing further is known. The institution seems to belong to the *jus sacrum*.

517. *POLLICITATIO*.—An offer or unilateral promise—*offerentis solius promissum*<sup>93</sup>—which in certain circumstances could not be withdrawn. It seems to be confined to the field of municipal or public law. If a person promised to finance or execute a work of public utility<sup>94</sup> in consideration of a magistracy or priesthood conferred or to be conferred upon him or for any other lawful cause, or if there was no such evident motive and the work had been begun by himself or by the town authority or either party had done something to give effect to it or he had transferred property to the town, the philanthropist was bound by his promise or could not reclaim the property, "for it is very right that benefits bestowed on cities should not be revoked because the donor changes his mind".<sup>95</sup> We are not told how the obligation was enforced.

Girard<sup>96</sup> mentions the case of offers of reward, *e.g.*, for the pursuit and capture of a fugitive slave, and concludes that they did not create a legal obligation as they do in some modern systems of law.<sup>97</sup>

## XIV. OF CONTRACT IN GENERAL

518. There was a Roman law of contracts, but scarcely a law of contract, *i.e.*, there was no theory of contract in

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<sup>90</sup> Dig. 2. 14. 1. 2.

<sup>91</sup> Dig. 50. 12. 3 pr.

<sup>92</sup> Dig. 50. 12. 2.

<sup>93</sup> Dig. 50. 12. 3 pr.

<sup>94</sup> Dig. 50. 12. 13. 1

<sup>95</sup> Dig. 50. 12. 1 and 3.

<sup>96</sup> p. 488.

<sup>97</sup> *E.g.*, B. G. B., art 657.

general apart from the special classes of contract of which the law took account. However, the stipulatio occupies a position by itself, inasmuch as any promise to which the law would give effect could assume this form, and in connection with the stipulatio principles are stated which to a great extent are applicable to contracts in general. Most of these are to be found in Institutes III, 19. With some re-arrangement they may be made to supply a general theory of contract. We shall consider first, the formation of contract, *i.e.*, what is necessary to its initial validity; secondly, the operation of contract, or the persons affected by it.

519. FORMATION OF CONTRACT.—In order that a valid contract may exist there must be:—(1) an agreement; (2) intended to create, and (3) apt to create a legal obligation between the parties; (4) relating to an object (act or forbearance), which is possible, and lawful; (5) made between competent persons; (6) not voidable on the ground of fraud or fear.

520. (1) The parties must be agreed, *i.e.*, there must be consensus ad idem. This is absent if the expressed intention of one party does not coincide with the expressed intention of the other, *e.g.*, “Do you promise to give ten?” “I promise to give five”, or conversely. This is the illustration given in the Institutes,<sup>98</sup> but in the Digest<sup>99</sup> Ulpian says, or is made to say, that the stipulation was in either event good for the lesser amount (§ 482).

521. There may be an apparent agreement where there is no real agreement. This will be the case when a person thinks that he is contracting with a certain person, but in fact is entering into relations with some one else, or when he thinks that the contract has a certain content when in fact it has not. In such circumstances the apparent contract is usually void, *i.e.*, no contract at all, because the essential conditions of every contract, *viz.*, persons who agree and something agreed upon are wanting. This brings us to the topic of error or mistake.

522. The commentators distinguish different kinds of error as (a) in persona, (b) in negotio, (c) in corpore, (d) in substantia.

523. (a) Error in persona.—This occurs if I am mistaken as to the identity of the person with whom I am con-

<sup>98</sup> Inst. 3. 19. 5.

<sup>99</sup> Dig. 45. 1. 1, 4.

tracting, e.g., I borrow money from A thinking that he is B. There is no contract of *mutuum*. But since it clearly would be unfair that I should keep the money, Celsus advised that an action could be brought for its recovery.<sup>100</sup> In modern systems mistake as to the person does not affect the contract unless there is some good reason why it should, as, for example, where there is a question of personal confidence or aptitude. The French civil code says, "mistake as to the person with whom one intends to contract does not cause the contract to be void unless the consideration of this person was the principal cause of the agreement".<sup>1</sup>

524. (b) Error in negotio. I hand over to you a thing by way of deposit. You accept it as a loan. No contract.<sup>2</sup> Intending partners are not agreed as to the terms of the partnership. No contract.<sup>3</sup>

525. (c) Error in corpore. I stipulate for the slave Stichus, you assent, but think I mean the slave Pamphilus, whom you suppose to be Stichus. No contract. I think I am buying the Cornelian estate. You think you are selling the Sempronian estate. No contract.<sup>4</sup>

526. (d) Error in substantia. It may be that the parties are agreed as to the thing which is the object of their contract, but that they both are, or one of them is, mistaken as to its essential quality. The texts of the *Corpus Juris* consider this question principally in connection with the contract of sale.<sup>5</sup> The conclusion to be drawn from them is that where the parties (or either of them) think (thinks) that the subject of the sale possesses a quality which, in fact, it does not, more particularly if it is not of the material supposed, and the difference between the thing as it is and as it is supposed to be makes it in effect a different thing, the sale is void.

"You have unwittingly sold me a table overlaid with silver for one of solid silver without my knowing it to be so, the sale is void and a *condictio* will lie to recover the money paid for it."<sup>6</sup>

The case is the same if a thing is sold as gold, both parties

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<sup>100</sup> Dig. 12. 1. 32. This has been called the *condictio* *Juventiana* after its author P. Juventius Celsus.

<sup>1</sup> C. C. 1110.

<sup>2</sup> Dig. 12. 1. 18, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Dig. 44. 7. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 9 pr.

<sup>5</sup> In the case of stipulation if the parties were agreed as to the *corpus* mistake as to the quality was irrelevant. Dig. 45. 1. 22.

<sup>6</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 41. 1.

believing it to be such, when in fact it is bronze.<sup>7</sup> These are cases of error common to both parties. But the same consequence follows if the error is on one side alone, provided that it is reasonable in the circumstances. You sell this thing knowing it to be bronze (but without saying that it is bronze, or is not bronze). I buy it supposing that it is being sold as gold. I am not bound by the contract. For, "in the civil law the sale was always avoided by the buyer's essential error, no matter whether the seller shared in it or not".<sup>8</sup> But in English Law a mistake as to quality "will not affect assent, unless it is a mistake of both parties and is as to the existence of some quality which makes the thing without the quality essentially different from the thing as it was believed to be".<sup>9</sup>

527. It is said that where there is error of this kind there is no contract—*nulla est emptio*<sup>10</sup>—but it would be more correct to say that there is a contract, but one which may be avoided by the party who is the victim of the mistake. If I have got bronze when I thought I was getting gold, presumably I may keep the bronze if I choose to do so, unless you sold it equally in error, and have a good reason for wanting to have it back. The texts of the Roman Law look at the question from the buyer's point of view. I, the buyer, have got bronze instead of gold. But what if you, the seller, have given gold instead of bronze? In principle you should be entitled to the same relief. But in both cases the error must be reasonable, what the commentators call *justa et probabilis error*,<sup>11</sup> and it is more likely to be so on the part of the buyer than on the part of the seller. A seller should as a rule know what he is selling.

528. Whether the mistake is sufficiently serious to entitle the mistaken party to relief depends upon the circumstances of the case. If the thing is represented as having qualities which in fact it has not, the disappointed purchaser will in any event, if there is a contract, have his action on the contract. But this is not the point now in question. What we are asking is not whether a contract has been broken, but whether any binding contract exists. The purchaser's mistake may have been induced by misrepresentation, but it is not necessary that it should have been so. It is important to remember that mistake will not have any effect at all, unless, so to say, it

<sup>7</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 14 *in fine*.

<sup>8</sup> Mackintosh, *Roman Law of Sale*, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> Lord Atkin in *Bell v. Lever Bros.* [1932] A. C. at p. 218.

<sup>10</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 41, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Dig. 41. 10. 5. Cf. 18. 1. 15, 1.

impinges upon the orbit of the agreement. Mistake external to the contract leaves it intact. For instance, I buy a picture supposing it to be the work of Apelles. This is why I buy it. In fact it is not the work of Apelles. I have no remedy, unless :—(a) the picture was sold as a work of Apelles; or (b) the seller fraudulently led me to think that it was such or acquiesced in my self-deception. This is sometimes called error in causa. It is a question of motive; and motive, generally, is irrelevant except as an indication of intention.

529. (2) The agreement must be intended to create a legal obligation between the parties. If the parties do not intend to be bound, the law will not bind them.<sup>12</sup> This rules out merely social engagements.

530. (3) The agreement must be apt to produce the intended result. It must conform to one or other of certain types; that is it must be concluded re, verbis, litteris or (in specific cases) consensu, or be an innominate contract or actionable pact. The type is called by the commentators the causa or the causa civilis of the contract. It is "the mark, whatever that may be in the particular case, which distinguishes any particular class of agreements from the common herd of pacts and makes them actionable".<sup>13</sup>

531. (4) The agreement must relate to an object which is possible and lawful. Every agreement must be an agreement about something. The something is the content or object of the agreement. It may consist in giving, doing or forbearing. In general, the parties fix their own terms, but when the contract is silent the law supplies matters of detail, e.g., as to time and place of performance. In principle, if performance was *ab initio* physically or legally impossible the contract was void. But in the contract of sale the rule was modified so as to give a *bona fide* purchaser of a free man supposed to be a slave, or of a *res sacra* or *religiosa* supposed to be in *commercio*, an action on the contract<sup>14</sup> to recover his so-called negative interest, i.e., compensation for the loss he had sustained in consequence of his reliance upon the validity of the contract (e.g., out-of-pocket expenses, loss of another contract), if the seller was in good faith, and general damages for breach of contract (so-called positive interest) if he was not.<sup>15</sup> Impossibility merely relative to the promisor did not relieve him from liability. "If

<sup>12</sup> Dig. 2. 14. 7, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Pollock, *Principles of Contract* (11) p. 562.

<sup>14</sup> Dig. 18. 1. 4; 62. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Mackintosh, *The Roman Law of Sale*, p. 111. But see Girard p. 474, n. 5.

I stipulate from a person who cannot carry out the contract, though another person might, Sabinus writes that there is a valid obligation."<sup>16</sup>

If the object of a contract is unlawful it is deemed to be impossible.<sup>17</sup>

582. (5) The parties must be competent to contract.

The following were entirely or partly incompetent, *viz*:—

(a) Persons of unsound mind, except during lucid intervals.<sup>18</sup> *Furiosus nullum negotium gerere potest.* 3. 19. 8  
Whether the other party knew of the disability or not was irrelevant.

(b) *Infantes*. Anciently this meant children who could not talk. In Justinian's law it meant children under seven years of age. In English law all persons of either sex below the age of twenty-one are "infants". 3. 19. 10

(c) *Pupilli*, *i.e.* children under 14 (males) or 12 (females), who are not in the power of an ascendant. If below seven years of age they came within the last class. If between seven and fourteen (or twelve) they could contract exclusively for their advantage, as by stipulation or by accepting a donation, but could not bind themselves by a contract which involved liability alone or reciprocal rights and duties without the *auctoritas* of their tutors. In other words, they could bind others to themselves, but could not bind themselves to others. But in bilateral contracts a pupil could not require the other party to perform unless prepared to carry out his own part of the contract.<sup>19</sup> 3. 19. 9.

(d) Slaves could not contract at all, being destitute of civil capacity, but they could incur a natural obligation (§ 392). 3. 19. 6.

(e) Sons and other male descendants in power could not contract *civiliter* with their *paterfamilias* (naturaliter they could), but might do so with any one else, provided they were above the age of puberty. If below that age, but no longer *infantes*, they could acquire for their *paterfamilias* but could not bind themselves by contract even with his authority.<sup>20</sup> 3. 19. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Dig. 45. 1. 137, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Dig. 28. 7. 15.

<sup>18</sup> Cod. 5. 70. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Dig. 18. 5. 7. 1; Buckl. *T.* p. 159; *M.* p. 98.

<sup>20</sup> A tutor could "authorise" the pupil's act. A father could not "authorise" his child's acts. Since the pupil could acquire for himself it was convenient that he should be able to bind himself *tutore auctore*. This did not apply to the child in power.



(f) Interdicted prodigals could not bind themselves by contract, but like pupils might stipulate for an advantage.<sup>21</sup>

(g) Independent persons under the age of twenty-five but above the age of puberty were originally capable of binding themselves without limit, but the praetor gave *restitutio in integrum* in case of prejudice. Under the later Empire minors who had permanent curators were assimilated to pupilli with the result that they could not bind themselves by contract without the consent of their curators (§ 127). If a minor had no curator (for he was not bound to have one) the old law continued to apply.

(h) Women. In the old law women in potestate and in manu could not bind themselves by contract.<sup>22</sup> Other women were in perpetual tutelage and counted as pupillae. With the disuse of manus marriage and the perpetual tutelage of women these disabilities disappeared, and women as such were no longer subject to any incapacity, except that by the S.C. Velleianum they could not bind themselves as sureties or by any other kind of *intercessio* (§ 567). There was also the prohibition of gifts between husband and wife (§ 201).

3 19. 7 (i) In contracts which required a spoken form of words deafness and dumbness were disqualifications. This applied particularly to the stipulation.

533. (6) The contract must not be voidable on the ground of fraud, or fear.

(a) Fraud (*dolus*). This might be raised as a defence to any action. In *stricti juris* actions it had to be pleaded (*exceptio doli*). In *bonae fidei* actions the judge took account of equitable defences without their being specially pleaded. There was also an *actio doli* which was available as a last resort in the absence of any other remedy. A contract procured by fraud might be set aside by *restitutio in integrum* (§ 758). and in *bonae fidei* contracts any fraudulent dealing gave rise to an action on the contract, *e.g.*, the *actio empti* or *venditi* in case of sale.

534 (b) Fear (*metus*) had the same effect as fraud as regards the avoidance of the contract. It might be set up by way of defence (*exceptio metus*) or be the ground of *restitutio in integrum*, or give rise to an action (*actio metus*).<sup>23</sup> The action had some peculiar features. It was an *actio in personam* available during one year against any person into whose hands property had come, which the

<sup>21</sup> Dig. 45. 1. 6.

<sup>22</sup> G. 3. 104.

<sup>23</sup> Commonly, but incorrectly, called the *actio quod metus causa*.

plaintiff had parted with under the influence of fear. It was not an *actio in rem*, *i.e.*, to assert title; for the plaintiff had parted with the property voluntarily, though under the influence of fear—*coactus volui*<sup>24</sup>; but since the *intentio* of the formula did not indicate any specific person as defendant it so far resembled a real action. It belonged to a class of actions which are described as *actiones in personam in rem scriptae*<sup>25</sup>—personal actions with a declaration in *rem* (§ 678). The action lay for four-fold damages if the property was not restored. By making restoration the defendant escaped liability. It was not any kind of fear which grounded this action. The evil threatened must be of a serious character, though *metus* seems to have been more comprehensive than duress in English law.

“The praetor says: Where an act is done through fear I will not uphold it.

“Fear, according to Labeo, must be understood to mean not simply any apprehension whatever, but fear of some evil of exceptional severity.”

“The fear which we must hold to be referred to in this Edict is not the fear felt by a weak-minded man, but such as might reasonably occur even in the case of a man of thorough firmness of character.”<sup>26</sup>

535. Force (*vis*) is the counterpart of fear. Ulpian says that formerly the Edict contained the words “force or fear”, but that the reference to force was omitted as unnecessary.<sup>27</sup> However, moral compulsion is one thing, physical constraint another. A man’s reaction to external control is no act of his. The old commentators distinguish *vis compulsiva*, which renders an act voidable, and *vis absoluta*, which makes it void. Cases of the latter may perhaps be imagined without resorting with the editors of Sohm to the hypothesis of hypnotic suggestion.<sup>28</sup>

536. OPERATION OF CONTRACT—PERSONS AFFECTED BY IT.—The principal rule is that a contract affects the parties to it and no one else; from which two conclusions are drawn:—

1. No one can stipulate for another;
2. No one can promise for another.

537. No one can stipulate for another. This means, primarily, that I cannot enforce a contract in the performance of which I am not personally interested. It means, further,

<sup>24</sup> Dig. 4. 2. 21, 5

<sup>25</sup> Dig. 4. 2. 9, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Dig. 4. 2. 1; 4. 2. 5 and 6 (Monro’s translation).

<sup>27</sup> Dig. 4. 2. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Sohm-Mittels-Wenger (1933) § 42.

that a third party cannot call for performance of a contract to which he is a stranger. Therefore if A says to B, "Do you promise to give ten aurei to C?" and B answers, "I promise", the stipulation is invalid. A acquires no right, because he has no interest. C acquires no right, because he is not a party. The severity of this rule was mitigated to a considerable extent in favour of A and to a less degree in favour of C.

3. 19. 20. 538. (a) If A has in fact an interest, the stipulation is valid. Thus, if A, on retiring from the administration of his ward's affairs, stipulates from a co-tutor for the safe administration of the estate (*rem pupilli salvam fore*), the stipulator has a direct interest, because, if the ward's affairs are mismanaged, he will himself be answerable in the *actio tutelae*; so, again, if a debtor stipulates for payment to his creditor, in order to escape a penalty which he will incur in the event of payment being overdue.

3. 19. 19. (b) A may artificially create an interest by stipulating for a penalty in the event of B failing to perform in favour of C. Then, if B fails to perform he incurs the penalty and A can sue him for it.

539. C does not fall within the scope of the above exceptions, that is to say, he has not in either case a right to call for performance from B. But exceptions existed in his favour also, some of them more apparent than real.

3. 19. 4. (i) If A was in C's power, whether as slave or as *filius familias*, the benefit of A's contract vested in the *dominus* or *paterfamilias*, who could sue upon it in his own name. The same result followed if the *dominus* or *paterfamilias* stipulated in favour of a slave or son in power. But this is no real exception, for as Justinian says, "Your voice is the voice of your son, just as his voice is yours". There are, in fact, in the eye of the law two parties only involved in this transaction. It is a question of agency or representation.

(ii) A stipulation for payment to the stipulator's heir or to the stipulator after his death was held to be invalid, for as Gaius says, "It was thought contrary to principle that an obligation should begin in the person of the heir". But Justinian remedied this by legislation.<sup>29</sup>

540. (iii) The stipulation, "Do you promise to give to me or to Titius", was free from objection. Titius was considered to be named, not in order to confer upon him the benefit of

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<sup>29</sup> G. 3. 100; Inst. 3. 19. 13.

the contract, but merely as a person to whom payment might be made on my account (*solutionis gratia adjectus*). It is like authorising your debtor to pay yourself directly or to place the money to your credit with your banker. A stipulation, "Do you promise to give to me *and* to Titius (a stranger to the family) gave no right to Titius, but was valid as concerns myself. It was a moot question between the schools whether I was entitled to claim the whole (Sabinian view) or only the half (Proculian view). Justinian decided in favour of the latter alternative.<sup>30</sup>

541. (iv) Real exceptions existed in the later law. The principal case was *donatio sub modo*, *i.e.* when a person accepted a gift subject to a charge, the third party in whose favour the charge was imposed had an action against a donee who failed to implement it.<sup>31</sup> A similar situation arose if a thing was lent or deposited with a direction that it was to be restored to a third party, and there were other cases.<sup>32</sup>

542. No one can promise for another. Therefore, if A says to B, "Do you promise that C will pay ten aurei?" and B answers "I promise", the stipulation is invalid. B incurs no liability, because he undertakes nothing on his own account; nor does C, because he is not a party to the contract.

543. However, this rule, like the last, came to be modified or even abrogated in practice so far as concerns the liability of B. For:—(i) As in the case of *stipulatio alteri* B may be made personally liable by an added stipulation for a penalty to be incurred in the event of C not doing what B promised he should do; (ii) B would in any event be bound if he promised to procure C's performance, and a promise that C would perform was easily construed as having this effect.

But C could not incur a liability under a contract to which he was not a party except so far as the law might hold him liable on the ground of representation. This brings us to the Roman Law of Principal and Agent which we shall consider presently.

544. The principle that a contract affects the parties and no one else, though illustrated by the verbal contract, is of general application to every kind of contract.<sup>33</sup> It is, in fact, a fundamental and a necessary consequence of the conception

<sup>30</sup> G. 3. 103; Inst. 3. 19. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Cod. 8. 54 (55). 3 (Diocletian).

<sup>32</sup> Girard, p. 480; Buckl. T. p. 427.

<sup>33</sup> Neque stipulari neque emere vendere contrahere ut alter suo nomine recte agat possumus (Paulus). Dig. 44. 7. 11.

puberty But a child below the age of puberty cannot bind himself even with his father's authority

11 A stipulation is void if an impossible condition is attached to it A condition is impossible if its happening is contrary to the natural order of things, for example, "Do you promise to give if I touch the sky with my finger?" But if the stipulation is, "Do you promise to give if I do not touch the sky with my finger?", the obligation is understood to be unconditional, and performance can be demanded immediately

12 [*Supra*, p 298].

§ 539

13 Formerly no one could stipulate for something to be given to him after his death, or after the death of the person from whom he stipulated, nor could a son or slave in power stipulate for performance after the death of his master or paterfamilias, for slaves and sons speak with the master's or father's voice Similarly a stipulation for performance on "the day before I die" or "on the day before you die" was invalid But since, as has been already said, all stipulations derive their effect from the consent of the parties, we have thought fit to amend the law in this matter and pronounce all such stipulations valid

14 Again a stipulation expressed in such terms as these was invalid.—"If the ship shall have come from Asia, do you promise to give today?", because it contemplates performance of a conditional promise before the condition takes effect But the Emperor Leo permitted such so-called preposterous stipulations in matters of dower and we have decided to give them general validity

15 A stipulation conceived in the terms "Do you promise to give when I die", or, "when you die?" was allowed to be good even by the old lawyers and is good today

16 We can properly stipulate for performance after the death of a third person

17 [*Supra*, p 298]

18 When several things are included in a single stipulation, if the promisor answers simply "I promise to give", he is answerable for all of them But if he promises one or more of them he is bound only to the extent of his promise It is as if there were several distinct stipulations and only one or more of them had taken effect, for each particular thing must be included both in the question and in the answer

§ 537

19 As has been said above, no one can stipulate for another, for obligations of this character were designed to enable every one to get the thing in which he was personally interested A stipulator is not interested in a thing being given to some one else Of course if this is what he wants done it will be well for him to stipulate for a penalty which he will be entitled to claim if the thing is not done, although he is not personally interested For when a person stipulates for a penalty the question is, not what is his interest but what is the amount of the penalty Therefore, a stipulation for something to be given to Titius is without effect, but if a penalty is added, for example, "If you shall not have given, do you promise to give so many aurei?", there is a binding stipulation

20. However, if a person stipulates for another, when he had an interest in the thing being done, it is settled that the stipulation is valid. For example, if a person who has been acting as tutor retires from the administration in favour of a co-tutor and stipulates for the security of his pupil's estate, the stipulation is binding, for he has an interest in its performance, since he will be personally liable if the estate is not properly administered. Again, one may validly stipulate for payment to one's manager; or to one's creditor, to the extent of one's interest, for example to avoid a penalty being incurred, or mortgaged land sold, in the event of failure to discharge the debt. 21. Conversely, if one has promised that some one else will do something, the position seems to be that the promisor is not bound unless he has promised a penalty on his own account. 22. If a thing is to become mine in a certain event a stipulation that it shall be made mine in that event is without effect.<sup>37</sup> § 538.

23. If the stipulator is thinking of one thing, the promisor of another, there is no obligation, any more than there would be if the answer did not correspond with the question; for instance, if some one stipulates with you for the slave Stichus, and you have in mind Pamphilus, whom you mistake for Stichus. § 542.

24. A promise which has an immoral cause is not binding, for example if the man promises to commit homicide or sacrilege. § 525-

25. If a person stipulates subject to a condition and dies before the condition takes effect, and it takes effect later, his heir may sue upon the stipulation, and similarly the promisor's heir may be sued. 26. If one stipulates for something to be given this year or this month, he cannot maintain an action until the whole year or month has expired. 27. If you stipulate for an estate or a slave, you cannot take proceedings immediately, but must give the promisor time to make delivery.

## XV. PRINCIPAL AND AGENT

545. The rules considered above, which render void stipulations in favour of a third person and promises directed to making a third person liable, if strictly applied, are fatal to the admission of agency in contract, and this was their effect in early Roman Law. However, a Law of Agency was gradually evolved, though it never reached the point of development which it has attained in modern systems.

546. To illustrate the situation, let us suppose that A has given B a mandate to buy a horse for him from C. What are the resulting legal relations—first, as regards the liability of A to C, *i.e.*, the rights of C against A; secondly, as regards the liability of C to A, *i.e.*, the rights of A against C? Or, to state the problem in more general terms—In what circum-

<sup>37</sup> Thus, if a legacy and a stipulation are subject to the same condition and the legacy takes effect, the stipulation fails (*Theophilus*).

stances and to what extent can a person be made liable, or become entitled, under, or by virtue of, a contract entered into by his agent with a third party?

547. As regards A's liability to C, C's recourse in the first instance is against the party who contracted with him, namely B, the agent; but in certain cases he can look beyond the agent B to the principal A. The law in this matter passed through three stages of historical development :—

(1) In the earliest period A incurred no liability whatever. He was not a party to the contract.

(2) In the classical period the praetor admitted along with the primary liability of B, the agent, a secondary liability of A, the principal, but only in a limited number of cases; and in these cases gave actions against A as well as against B. They have been named *actiones adjecticiae qualitatis*, because they were actions of an additional or supplementary character. There were five such actions, viz :—

(a) *actio quod jussu*; (b) *actio de peculio et in rem verso*; (c) *actio tributoria*; (d) *actio institoria*; (e) *actio exercitoria*.

4. 7. 1. 548. (a) The *actio quod jussu* lay against a dominus or paterfamilias when he had authorised or ratified a contract entered into by his slave or son in power.<sup>38</sup> It seems that the jussu was directed to the third party, not to the slave or son.<sup>39</sup>

4 7. 4 549. (b) The *actio de peculio et in rem verso* lay, independently of authorisation or ratification, when a slave or son who had a peculium had bound himself by contract. It was directed against the master or father, who was liable to the extent of the peculium (*de peculio*) or to the extent to which he had derived a profit from the transaction (*de in rem verso*), whichever was the greater.

In calculating the amount of the peculium the defendant was allowed to deduct what was owed by the slave or son to himself or (with one exception) to any person in his power.

4 7. 3 550. (c) The *actio tributoria* was of more limited application. It was available when a slave or son had been trading with his peculium with the knowledge of his master or father. The superior was required to distribute the assets *pro rata* amongst the creditors, amongst whom he ranked without preference. The fund available for this purpose included the capital invested in the business and profits derived from it

<sup>38</sup> Dig. 15 4 1

<sup>39</sup> Windscheid, II, § 482.

(*merx pecularis*). If a creditor considered that he had been unfairly treated he might have recourse to this action to have his dividend brought up to the proper amount.<sup>40</sup> It offered the advantage that the defendant could not first deduct what was due to himself. On the other hand the total *peculium* might largely exceed the portion invested in trade. Obviously, a creditor would not bring this action if he could get better satisfaction in the *actio de peculio et in rem verso*.

551. (d) The *actio institoria* lay when a *dominus* or *paterfamilias* allowed his slave or son or an independent free person to carry on a business as his manager (*institor*). The superior was liable for the trade debts. 4. 7. 2.

552. (e) The *actio exercitoria* was a similar action which lay when the owner of a ship (*exercitor*) had appointed his son or slave or an independent free person master of the ship (*magister*). He was liable for the debts incurred by the master in the exercise of his functions.

553. The common element, so far, in all these actions is that they arose out of transactions entered into by subordinate members of the family. Agency, therefore, had its origin within the circle of the Roman family. But in the last two of the above-mentioned actions the law of agency escaped from the family, and the same consequences followed when a person unconnected with the family of the principal was appointed to manage a business or to be master of a ship. This marked a step in advance, but it was limited to these two cases.

554. (3) The last stage in the process of development was reached when the principle of these actions was extended to other cases of agency of independent persons. This was the work not of the praetor, but of the jurists. Papinian advised that when a principal had given his procurator authority to raise loans the lender might maintain a *utilis actio* based upon the analogy of the *institoria*<sup>41</sup>; similarly if the procurator had a mandate to sell.<sup>42</sup> Practice may even have gone the length of including cases of mandate to do a particular act. If so, the ultimate result was that a principal might in every case be rendered liable to a third party in respect of a contract entered into by an agent in the principal's name and within the scope of the agent's authority. But the agent also was liable.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Dig. 14. 4. 7, 2.

<sup>41</sup> Dig. 14. 3. 19 pr.: *utilis ad exemplum institoriae dabitur actio*.

<sup>42</sup> Dig. 19. 1. 13, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Dig. 14. 1. 1, 17; *est autem nobis electio utrum exercitorem an magistrum convenire velimus*.



## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK IV

## TITLE VII

*Of contracts made with persons in power*

Since mention has been made above of the action which is taken against the peculium of sons in power and of slaves, it is necessary to discuss in some detail this action, as well as the other actions which arising out of the contracts of sons and slaves are given against their parents and masters. Since very much the same rules apply to both, it will shorten the discussion if we confine our remarks to slaves and masters. If there is anything peculiar to the case of sons and parents it will be mentioned as occasion arises.

- § 548. 1. If then any one has contracted with a slave with his master's authority (*jussu domini*) the praetor allows him an action to the full extent of the contract against the master, because the other party to the contract is deemed to look to the master's credit.
2. On the same principle the praetor gives two other actions in solidum, the *actio exercitoria* and the *actio institoria*. The *actio exercitoria* lies, when a master has appointed his slave master of a ship, and a contract has been made with him in relation to the business in hand. The action is so called because a person who takes the ordinary profits of a ship is termed an exercitor. The
- § 552. *actio institoria* lies when a master has put a slave in charge of a shop or some other business and a contract has been made with him in the course of the business in question. The action is known by this name because a person put in charge of a business is called an institor. The praetor allows these two actions also if the person put in charge of a ship or a shop or other business is a free man or another person's slave, for the same principle of equity applies in this case as well.
- § 551.

3. The praetor has introduced yet another action which is known as the *actio tributoria*, which is of the following nature. If a slave with the knowledge of his master trades with his peculium, and a contract is made with him incidental to the trade in question, the praetor requires the capital invested in the business and the proceeds to be distributed rateably between the master, if anything is owing to him, and the other creditors; and since he leaves to the master the duty of making the distribution, if any one of the creditors complains that the share assigned to him is less than it should be, he gives him the *actio tributoria*.
- § 550

4. There is another action known as the *actio de peculio et in rem verso*. The effect of this is that, although a slave has contracted without his master's approval, the master is liable to the full extent of what has been applied to his use, and, where this is not the case,
- § 549.

then to the extent of the peculium. There is understood to be an application to the master's use when a slave has made any necessary expenditure on his account, for example, if he has borrowed money and with it paid his creditors or repaired buildings which were falling into ruin, or bought wheat for the use of the household, or acquired land or any other thing that was needed. Therefore, if, for example, your slave has borrowed ten aurei from Titius and has paid five of the ten to your creditor, and has spent the remaining five in any general way, you must be condemned in solidum in respect of the first five, but, as regards the second five, only to the extent of the peculium. It is evident that, if the whole ten have been applied to your use, Titius can recover the whole. For, although there is but one action *de peculio et in rem verso*, nevertheless, it has two condemnations. So the judge must first enquire whether there has been an application to your use, and it is only when he finds that the amount claimed has not been so applied, or only partly so, that he goes on to estimate the amount of the peculium. In making this calculation, deduction is first made of what the slave owes to his master, or to a person in his power, and it is only what remains that counts as peculium. It may happen, however, that what the slave owes to another person in the master's power is not deducted from his peculium, as when the creditor is a slave who is part of the peculium. This means that what he owes to a *vicarius* is not deducted.

5. No doubt, a person who has contracted by the master's authority or who is in a position to bring the *actio institoria* or the *actio exercitoria* may also bring the *actio de peculio et in rem verso*. But it would be very foolish if, failing to take advantage of an action which would give him the full amount of his claim under the contract, he should put himself to the difficulty of proving that there had been an application to the defendant's use, or that the slave had a peculium, and one sufficient to meet his claim in full. Similarly, a person who can bring an *actio tributoria*, can also bring the *actio de peculio et in rem verso*; but, in this case, it is sometimes expedient to bring the one action, sometimes the other. The advantage in bringing the *actio tributoria* is that in this the master's position is not privileged, that is to say, there is no deduction of what is owed to the master and he has just the same right as the other creditors; but in the *actio de peculio* deduction is first made of what is owed to the master, and he is condemned to the extent of what remains. On the other hand the *actio de peculio* has the advantage that in it account is taken of the whole peculium, but in the *actio tributoria* only of so much of the peculium as is embarked in trade, which may be a third or a fourth or a very small part of the whole, while the greater part of the peculium is invested in land, or slaves, or put out at interest. So everyone must choose the action appropriate to the circumstances. Certainly if it can be proved that there has been an application to the defendant's use the *actio de in rem verso* is to be preferred.

6. What we have said about slave and master must be understood

to apply equally to a son and daughter, grandson and grand-daughter on the one hand, and to the father or grandfather in whose power they are on the other.

7. There is, however, a rule which is peculiar to children in power, namely, that the *senatusconsultum Macedonianum* forbids loans of money to be made to them; and the lenders are denied an action either against son or daughter, grandson or grand-daughter, whether still in power or released from power by death of the pater-familias or by emancipation, or against father or grandfather, whether the child is still in power or has been emancipated. This the Senate provided because it often happened that persons who were heavily in debt from having borrowed money, which was wasted in riotous living, entertained designs against their parents' lives.

8. Finally, it must be remarked that if a son or slave has contracted by the authority of parent or master, or if the subject of the contract has been applied to his use, a *condictio* may be brought against the parent or master directly, just as if he had been the original party to the transaction. Similarly, where the *actio exercitoria* or *institoria* can be brought, the *condictio* is also available, for in this case too the contract is taken to have been made by the authority of the principal.<sup>44</sup>

## XVI. PRINCIPAL AND AGENT

(continued)

555. Next, as to the rights of the principal against the party who has concluded a contract with his agent. Here, again, agency begins in the family. A master or parent acquires the benefit of contracts entered into by slaves or sons in power, whether they contract in their own name, or in his, or in the name of another person in the same power; and within defined limits contractual rights accrue to a master or putative master through a slave in whom he has the usufruct or through a free man, or another person's slave, *bona fide* possessed. But no rights could be acquired through a free man, known to be free, and a stranger to the family.<sup>45</sup> It followed that (to revert to our illustration), if A gives B a mandate to buy a horse from C, though in the latest stage of Roman Law A is liable to C, it is not the case that C is liable to A. Apart from novation, which means a new contract substituting A as C's creditor in place of B (§ 645), the only way in which A can sue C is by making use of B's action upon the contract. This is effected by means of a mandate to sue given by the agent B to his principal A, which the agent might be compelled to give in an *actio*

<sup>44</sup> Plainly what is stated in this section was a later development.

<sup>45</sup> Dig. 14. 3. 1; 45. 1. 126, 2.

mandati.<sup>46</sup> Further than this the Roman Law did not, in principle, go; that is to say, A could not sue except as the assignee of the right of action of his own agent B; and B, notwithstanding the assignment of his right of action to A, continued to be liable to C. This falls very far short of true agency. It is true that there is a text in the Digest in which Ulpian, after speaking of the *utilis actio ad exemplum institoriae* (*supra* § 554), is made to say *ergo et per contrarium dicendum est utilem ex empto* (this is a mistake for *ex vendito*) *actionem domino competere*<sup>47</sup>—that the principal has a corresponding action against the third party; but this is clearly interpolated. Professor Buckland says, “This is Justinian and probably does not really represent the law even for his time”.<sup>48</sup> Exceptionally, to encourage the import of grain the Praefect of the Market allowed owners of vessels engaged in the trade to sue the debtors of their captains.<sup>49</sup> There were some other cases in which the principal might by special favour be allowed to bring the mandatory’s action as an *actio utilis*,<sup>50</sup> as, for instance, if the agent was insolvent,<sup>51</sup> or would suffer no prejudice by the principal bringing the action, *e.g.* when the contract was unilateral, and the agent therefore incurred no liability, or when the principal had satisfied the third party’s claim under the contract.<sup>52</sup> But these are all cases of a special character, and go little way to invade the principle that A could not, at any period of Roman Law, acquire a contractual right against C through an intermediary B.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III (TITS. XVII, XXVIII)

#### TITLE XVII

##### *Of the stipulations of slaves*

A slave has a power of stipulating derived from his master, and since an inheritance in many respects represents the person of the deceased, if a slave who belongs to an inheritance stipulates for anything before the heir has entered, he acquires for the inheritance and by consequence for the person who afterwards becomes heir.

1. A slave acquires for his master whether he stipulates for his § 555.

<sup>46</sup> Dig. 41. 2. 49, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Dig. 19. 1. 13, 25.

<sup>48</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 519.

<sup>49</sup> Dig. 14. 1. 1, 18.

<sup>50</sup> Dig. 14. 3. 1 and 2.

<sup>51</sup> Dig. 46. 5. 5.

<sup>52</sup> Girard, p. 719; Buckl. *T.* p. 519; *M.* p. 302.

master or for himself or for a fellow slave or without mentioning any one in particular. The same principle applies to children in power so far as the acquisition of a child can benefit a parent.

2. When the subject of the stipulation is something to be done by the stipulator, this is always understood to mean the stipulator in person, for example, if a slave stipulates for a licence to go or to drive. This implies a duty not to interfere with the exercise of the licence by the slave himself. It does not extend to the master.

3. If a slave who is owned in common by more than one master stipulates, he acquires for each of them in proportion to his ownership, unless he stipulates by the authority of, or expressly for, one or other of them. In that case he acquires for him alone. If what he stipulates for cannot be acquired by one of his masters it goes wholly to the other, for example, if it belongs to one of them already.

## TITLE XXVIII

### *Of the persons through whom obligations are acquired*

Now that we have explained the kinds of obligation which arise from contract or quasi ex contractu, it must be remarked that you may acquire not only in your own person, but also through persons in your power, as slaves or sons, but with a distinction. What you acquire through your slaves is entirely yours, but as regards what you acquire from obligations through children in your power the distinction made by our constitution between ownership and usufruct takes effect, with the result that the father enjoys the usufruct in any profit accruing from an action, while the ownership is reserved to the son;<sup>52a</sup> it being understood that the father brings the action in conformity with the rules laid down in our recent constitution.

§ 219. 1. Further, you acquire through free persons and another person's slave whom you possess in good faith, but only in two events, namely, if they acquire by their own exertions or in connection with your affairs.

§ 218. 2. The same applies to a slave in whom you have the usufruct or use. 3. It is a settled rule that a slave owned in common acquires for each of his masters in proportion to their interest except that if he stipulates or takes delivery expressly for one of them, he acquires for that one alone; for example, if he stipulates, "Do you promise to give to my master Titius?"; and the result is the same, as observed above, if the slave stipulates by the authority of one master alone. This was formerly matter of doubt, but has been settled in this sense by our constitution.<sup>53</sup>

B. 17. 3.

## XVII. PRINCIPAL AND SURETY

556. A contract of suretyship is a contract whereby one person binds himself to be answerable for the debt of another. The person primarily liable is called the principal debtor or

<sup>52a</sup> Cod. 6. 61. 6; *supra*, p. 154, n. 62    <sup>53</sup> G. 3. 167a; Cod. 4. 27. 2.

principal; the person secondarily liable is called the surety or guarantor. The relation of principal and surety was constituted in Roman Law in various ways, and the merely secondary nature of the surety's liability, as will be seen, was only gradually established. The methods of creating suretyship were three, viz., the verbal contract, mandate and constitutum.

557. (1) The verbal contract. In the classical period there were three types of suretyship by stipulation, which were distinguished by the form of words used by the stipulator (creditor) in addressing the intended surety. After first stipulating from the person who was to be the principal debtor he turned to the person who was to be surety and said, "Do you promise the same?" The words of the question might be *Idem dari spondes* or *Idem fidepromittis* or *Idem* (or *Id*) *fide tua esse jubes?*<sup>54</sup> The three resulting contracts were distinguished as *sponsio*, *fidepromissio*, and *fidejussio*, and the surety was known as *sponsor*, *fidepromissor* and *fidejussor*, the term *adpromissor* being applied indifferently to all three. Of these *sponsio* was available to Roman citizens alone; *sponsio* and *fidepromissio* could only be incidental to a principal liability created by stipulation, as in the illustration given above.<sup>55</sup> By the time of Justinian the only type of verbal suretyship remaining in use was *fidejussio*, which might be created by any appropriate form of words spoken or written; and might be incidental to any kind of liability, contractual, quasi-contractual or delictual,<sup>56</sup> and in the first case to any kind of contract, *re*, *verbis*, *litteris* or *consensu*. Unlike the earlier forms, it bound the surety's heirs.<sup>57</sup> The surety might undertake an obligation equal to or less, but not greater, than that of the principal debtor. Thus the principal might be bound absolutely, the surety conditionally, but not conversely. The principal obligation might be civil or natural.

558. (2) *Mandatum*. The relation of principal and surety might also be created by mandate. Thus, if I am willing to be surety for a loan to be made by you to Titius, I give you a mandate to lend to Titius, with the result that if you fail to recover the money from Titius you can proceed against me by the *actio mandati contraria*.<sup>58</sup> A mandate of this

<sup>54</sup> G. 3. 116; Dig. 45. 1. 75, 6.

<sup>55</sup> G. 3. 119.

<sup>56</sup> Dig. 46. 1. 8, 5 and 6; 56, 3; 70, 5.

<sup>57</sup> G. 3. 120; Inst. 3. 20. 2.

<sup>58</sup> G. 3. 156; Inst. 3. 26. 6.

kind was known as *mandatum credendae pecuniae*. Tradition has attached to it the name of *mandatum qualificatum* (§ 500).<sup>59</sup>

559. (3) *Constitutum debiti*. This was an informal promise by a third party to discharge a debt due to you from Titius, made actionable by the praetor (§ 513). But Titius was not released. He remained liable as principal debtor.

560. *Nature of surety's liability*. On the face of it *fidejussio* creates not a secondary, but a primary, liability. B does not say, "I promise to pay if A does not". He says, "I pledge my credit for the same" (or "for it") or "I pledge my credit for what Titius owes". The result is that, if he chooses to do so, the creditor can proceed against B before proceeding against, or even demanding performance from, A.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, he will have good reason for wishing to do so, even at the risk of exposing himself to an *actio injuriarum* (§ 598) by a principal debtor, who might choose to resent the reflection on his solvency<sup>61</sup>; for if he took proceedings against the principal debtor, the obligation of the *fidejussor* (this does not apply to the *mandator*,<sup>62</sup> or to the *constituens*) was before Justinian extinguished by operation of law in consequence of the *litis contestatio* (§ 695), and the creditor would lose the benefit of his security. The surety, therefore, was in a very unpleasant position. He might be called upon to pay, even though the principal debtor was completely solvent. He could be sued for the whole debt, though there were other sureties. If he paid, he usually had recourse against the principal debtor in an *actio mandati* or *negotiorum gestorum*, but he was not, in principle, entitled to claim contribution from co-sureties.<sup>63</sup>

561. In process of time these consequences of suretyship were avoided or overcome in practice or by legislation. A creditor might be willing to substitute for the usual absolute guarantee an undertaking by the surety to be answerable for what the creditor failed to recover from the principal debtor (*fidejussio indemnitis*).<sup>64</sup> This meant that he had to go against the principal debtor before suing the surety. Or a creditor, who was pressing a surety for payment, might be induced to accept the surety's mandate to sue the principal debtor, thus retaining his recourse against the surety in the

3. 26. 2.

<sup>59</sup> *i.e.*, a mandate of a special character.

<sup>60</sup> *Cod.* 8, 40(41). 19.

<sup>61</sup> *Dig.* 47. 10. 19.

<sup>62</sup> *Paul. Sent.* 2. 17. 16; *Dig.* 13. 5. 18, 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Cod.* 8. 40(41). 11.

<sup>64</sup> *Dig.* 45. 1. 116: *quanto minus ab eo consequi posses*.

*actio mandati*. But these contrivances did not go far to improve the surety's position. Better relief was afforded by the three "benefits", of cession of actions, of division and of order. 3 26. 2.

562. Benefit of cession of actions (*beneficium cedendarum actionum*). From the early days of the Empire, if not earlier, it became the practice for a surety to demand cession of actions (§ 633) as a condition of satisfying the creditor's claim.<sup>65</sup> A creditor who unreasonably refused it could be met by a plea of fraud, but perhaps it was not until Justinian that a surety could demand it as of right. Cession of actions gave the surety both a recourse against the principal debtor and a means of obtaining contribution from co-sureties. It was open to the serious objection that satisfaction of the creditor's claim extinguished his right of action, so that nothing remained to cede. This was evaded by the fiction that the payment made by the surety was not a satisfaction of the claim, but a purchase of the right of action.<sup>66</sup> It was distinctly advantageous to the surety to get cession of actions against the principal debtor; for it might happen that the creditor had a privilege, giving him preference over other creditors, or was secured by a hypothec. A surety suing the principal debtor on a mandate (§ 560) had not these advantages.<sup>67</sup>

563. Benefit of division. Cession of actions, desirable in the last-mentioned case, was essential in relation to co-sureties, for without it (apart from the improbable event of one co-surety having received a mandate from another) there was no right to claim contribution. In the early law there had been some legislation on the subject, to which reference will be made below. But in the classical and post-classical periods a surety's right to contribution was secured by an enactment of the Emperor Hadrian which allowed a surety to require the creditor to divide his claim *pro rata* between those sureties who were solvent at the time of action brought. 3. 20. 4. This was known as the *beneficium divisionis*. A surety who failed to take advantage of it had (except as above-mentioned) no right to contribution, and, as Justinian says, he had only himself to thank for this, since he might have availed himself of the Emperor's rescript. This benefit was available from the beginning when the suretyship was

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<sup>65</sup> Dig. 46. 1 17.

<sup>66</sup> Dig 46 3 76

<sup>67</sup> Guad, p 809



created by *fidejussio* or *mandatum*. It was only Justinian who made it available to the constituents.<sup>68</sup>

564. Benefit of order or excussion (*beneficium ordinis seu excussionis*). During the whole of the Imperial period, as we have seen (§ 560), the creditor had the strongest possible motive for proceeding against the fidejussor before suing the principal debtor. When Justinian in 531 abolished the consumptive effect of *litis contestatio* (§ 630), this ceased to be so, and he completed his reform by requiring the creditor to proceed in the first instance against the principal debtor, if within the jurisdiction. If he was not, the judge was to give the surety time to produce him, and it was only if the time elapsed without his having done so that he was himself exposed to the creditor's action.<sup>69</sup>

565. The above-mentioned benefits have been transmitted to many modern systems of law, such as the French, but they are of doubtful value. Cession of actions is unnecessary where the law provides, as is usually the case, that the surety who has paid is subrogated into the rights of the creditor. Where the other benefits are admitted by law, it is usual to exclude them by contract.

566. Gaius mentions a number of early statutes, which were no longer in use in the later law. A *lex Publilia* gave a sponsor who had discharged the debt and was not reimbursed within six months an action known as *actio depensi*, giving rise to *manus injectio pro judicato*, and later to two-fold damages in case of denial.<sup>70</sup> A *lex Apuleia* introduced a kind of partnership between sureties. As between themselves each surety was liable only *pro rata* and could recover what he had paid in excess of his share from the others, but each surety continued to be liable to the creditor in *solidum*.<sup>71</sup> By a *lex Furia* a surety's liability only endured for two years and where there were co-sureties the creditor was required to divide his claim between such of them as were in existence at the time when the debt fell due.<sup>72</sup> This meant that the risk of insolvency of any one of them fell on the creditor and not, as under the *Epistola Hadriani*, upon the others. These two statutes applied only to *sponsores* and *fidepromissores*, and the second of them only to suretyship in Italy. All three are of very early date, not later than

<sup>68</sup> Cod. 4. 18. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Nov. 4. 1 (A.D. 535).

<sup>70</sup> G. 3. 127; 4. 22 and 25.

<sup>71</sup> G. 3. 122.

<sup>72</sup> G. 3. 121.

B.C. 200. A *lex Cicereia* required a creditor who accepted sponsors or *fidepromissors* as sureties to make a public declaration of the nature of the liability and of the number of sureties he intended to take. Any one of them might demand a *praejudicium* (§ 705) within thirty days to enquire whether the required declaration had been made. If it was found that it had not been made, their liability was discharged.<sup>74</sup>

Lastly, a *lex Cornelia* forbade any surety to bind himself for the same debtor to the same creditor in one year for more than 20,000 sesterces, and limited liability to that amount.<sup>75</sup> Of all these statutes this one alone applied to *fidejussores* as well as to *sponsores* and *fidepromissores*. But like the others it passed out of use in the later law.

567. By edicts of Augustus and Claudius women were forbidden to "intercede" for their husbands.<sup>76</sup> Intercession means undertaking liability for another's debt whether instead of him (*privative intercession*) or together with him, *e.g.*, as surety (*cumulative intercession*). Afterwards the *senatus-consultum Vellaeianum* (A.D. 46) extended the prohibition to all cases of intercession by women.<sup>77</sup> Effect was given to the S.C. by the *exceptio senatusconsulti Vellæiani* (§ 726). Justinian in a *Novel* dealing with a variety of matters declared invalid any instrument by which a wife bound herself for her husband, unless it was clear that it related to moneys applied to her own use.<sup>78</sup> This law from the summary of it made by the glossators is usually cited as the *authentica siqua mulier* (§ 34). The two enactments passed into the medieval and modern law and were the subject of extensive comment. Many exceptions were admitted, and it was generally allowed that a woman might renounce the benefit of both laws provided that she did so with full understanding of what she was doing. All this load of tradition is retained to-day in the law of South Africa,<sup>79</sup> but it is widely held that these privileges (or disabilities) of women are not required in an age (relatively) of feminine emancipation. In France they were abolished by Henry IV in 1604.

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<sup>74</sup> G. 3 123.

<sup>75</sup> G. 3 124.

<sup>76</sup> Dig. 16. 1. 2 pr.

<sup>77</sup> Dig. 16. 1. 2, 1.

<sup>78</sup> Nov. 134. 8.

<sup>79</sup> Lee, p. 316.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK III (Tit. XX)

*Of fidejussors*

§ 563.

It often happens that when a man makes a promise, other persons, known as fidejussors or sureties, bind themselves for him, as is the usual practice when creditors wish to have a better security. 1. Fidejussors may be accepted in respect of any obligation, whether arising *re, verbis, litteris* or *consensu*. It makes no difference whether the principal obligation is civil or natural, so much so that a man may bind himself for a slave, whether the slave's creditor is a stranger, or the slave's own master, in respect of the slave's natural obligation. 2. The obligation undertaken by a fidejussor is transmitted to his heirs. 3. The fidejussor's obligation may precede or follow the principal obligation. 4. If there are several fidejussors, however many they may be, each is liable for the whole debt, so that the creditor has the option to claim the whole from any one he pleases. But the Epistle of the Emperor Hadrian compels him to divide his claim amongst such of the sureties as are solvent at the time of the *litis contestatio*. Consequently, if at such time one of the sureties is insolvent, a heavier burden is laid on the others. If the creditor obtains payment of the whole amount from one of the sureties, the whole loss falls upon him alone if the principal debtor is insolvent, and he has only himself to blame, for he might have been aided by the Emperor's rescript and have required that he should be sued merely for his rateable share. 5. Fidejussors cannot undertake a greater liability than the principal debtor, for their liability is merely accessory to his, and there cannot be more in an accessory than there is in the thing to which it accedes. But a fidejussor may be bound for less than the principal debtor. Thus, if the principal promises ten aurei, the fidejussor may be bound for five, but not conversely. Similarly, the principal debtor may promise unconditionally, the fidejussor conditionally, but not conversely. For "more" and "less" are not merely a question of quantity, but also of time. There is more in giving immediately than in giving after an interval of time. 6. If a fidejussor has discharged the debt, he has an *actio mandati* to recover an indemnity from the principal debtor. A fidejussor may bind himself by using appropriate words in the Greek language. 8. With regard to the stipulations of fidejussors it may be accepted as a general principle that if anything is stated in writing to have been done it is deemed to have been done, and therefore if a person declares in writing that he has bound himself as fidejussor, it is presumed that all necessary forms have been observed.

§ 433.

## XVIII. QUASI-CONTRACT

568. The expression "quasi-contract" is, as has been seen (§ 392), open to objection. The essence of contract is agreement. But in the relations of which we are now to speak there is no agreement. Justinian, however, says that the resulting obligations arise as it were from contract (quasi ex contractu), though they resemble obligations arising from contract, positively only in being obligations and negatively in not arising from delict. Some of them, however, seem to have an analogy to particular contracts. Thus negotiorum gestio has an affinity with mandate, indebiti solutio with mutuum, co-ownership with societas. But these analogies cannot in principle justify the extension of the term quasi-contractual to other cases to which it is wholly inapplicable. We must be content, therefore, to say that the description is consecrated by usage and includes certain specific obligations, which we proceed to consider.

569. NEGOTIORUM GESTIO.—The essence of this transaction consists in the fact that one person, termed the negotiorum gestor, has rendered a service to another, termed the dominus negotiorum or dominus rei gestae, without mandate or other legal obligation. It emerged into the field of law when the praetor gave an action for an indemnity to a person who in the absence of another had undertaken his defence in judicial proceedings. Later, under the influence of the jurists, it was extended to include services of every kind whether they took the form of general administration or of single acts. There was now a civil law action with reciprocal obligations. It was essential that the gestor should have acted in the interest of another person, not in his own interest. For this reason the action was not available to a *bona fide* possessor who had spent money on property, supposing it to be his own.<sup>80</sup> It was also required (in principle) that the gestor should have acted with the intention of binding the other party, *i.e.*, in the expectation that he would have a legal claim to an indemnity. This condition was absent if he intended to render a gratuitous service.<sup>81</sup> Lastly, he could have no claim in respect of an act which the dominus had forbidden him to do.<sup>82</sup>

570. There is no impropriety in translating dominus and gestor by principal and agent, though these words usually imply an authority which in the case of negotiorum gestio is

<sup>80</sup> Dig. 10. 3. 14, 1.

<sup>81</sup> Dig. 3. 5. 4.

<sup>82</sup> Dig. 3. 5. 7(8), 3; 17. 1. 40.

absent. This prefaced, we proceed to speak of the duties of the parties.

3. 27. 1. 571. The agent was bound (a) to render account of his proceedings; (b) to exercise *exacta diligentia*; but if he acted in an emergency he was liable only for *dolus*.<sup>83</sup>

572. The principal was bound to indemnify the agent in respect of expenses and liabilities usefully incurred (*si utiliter gessit*).<sup>84</sup> This means that the gestor was not entitled to an indemnity unless what he did was in the circumstances a right thing to do in the interest of the dominus. Good intentions were not enough. An element in the case may be what was in the mind of the principal. If I repair a house, "which the owner had abandoned because he could not afford the expense of it or one which he did not think that he required", I cannot claim compensation; for "to have an action on *negotia gesta* a man must have managed the affair beneficially, but he does not manage it beneficially where he undertakes something which is not wanted or which would lay a burden on the householder".<sup>85</sup> It is the state of things at the moment which is taken into account, not the actual event. I spend money for the treatment of a sick slave. I can claim reimbursement, though the slave happens to die.

573. A *negotiorum gestor* is in a worse position than a mandatary, who, provided he exhibits the proper degree of diligence, can claim to be indemnified for all expenses incurred in the execution of his mandate. By ratifying the gestor's act, the dominus puts himself in relation to the gestor in the same position as if he had given an antecedent mandate so as to give the gestor the *actio mandati contraria*, but this does not *ex post facto* convert the *negotiorum gestio* for all purposes into a contract of *mandatum* so as to give the principal the *actio mandati directa*, for condemnation in this action involved *infamia*, and the dominus could not by his unilateral act put this heavier burden on the other party to the transaction.<sup>86</sup>

574. ACTIONS. The *actio negotiorum gestorum directa* lay against the gestor, the *actio contraria* against the dominus.

- 3 27. 6 575. INDEBITI SOLUTIO.—When a person has paid in error what he was not bound to pay the law lays upon the person who has received payment a duty of restitution:

<sup>83</sup> Dig. 3. 5. 3, 9.

<sup>84</sup> Dig. 3. 5. 2.

<sup>85</sup> Dig. 3. 5. 9(10). (Monro's translation).

<sup>86</sup> Girard, p. 665.

576. Has paid. Payment (*solutio*) includes any performance whereby one person has been enriched at the expense of another. Usually it will be the handing over of money or of some other thing, but it may also consist in undertaking a new liability or in discharging an existing liability.

in error, *i.e.*, believing the payment to be due. The mistake must be reasonable in the circumstances, and except in the case of privileged persons, particularly women and minors, must be a mistake of fact and not of law. *Regula est juris quidem ignorantiam cuique nocere, facti vero ignorantiam non nocere.*<sup>87</sup> If one pays in doubt, does one pay in error? "In classical law the dominant view was that the doubt did not suffice, but Justinian put it on the same level as error."<sup>88</sup>

not bound to pay. The payment must have been undue (*indebitum*), *i.e.*, not due either by civil law, or by natural law, for even a natural obligation excludes the *condictio indebiti* (§ 392). A payment is said to be undue if the supposed debt (1) does not exist, whether it cannot exist, or has ceased to exist, or has not come into existence (except that a debtor does not pay unduly, if he pays in anticipation of the due date or of a condition which is certain to occur)<sup>88a</sup>; or (2) has been made to a person who was not the creditor or entitled to receive payment on his behalf; or (3) by a person who was not the debtor unless in the name of the debtor and with the intention of discharging the debt.<sup>89</sup>

577. There were cases in which the *condictio indebiti* was excluded, even when the above conditions were present, namely, those in which denial of liability involved the payment of double damages, if the claim was established to the satisfaction of the Court. These were, principally, action on a judgment (*actio iudicati*), action under the *lex Aquilia* and actions on certain legacies. The reason for this exceptional treatment is obscure. Perhaps payment, in these cases, was regarded as "a sort of compromise by which the risk involved in defending the action was avoided".<sup>90</sup>

578. ACTIONS.—The case was treated as analogous to *mutuum*. The appropriate action was the *condictio indebiti*, which might be according to circumstances *condictio certae pecuniae* or *condictio triticaria*, or (which was not the case with *mutuum*) a *condictio incerti*, *e.g.*, to obtain release from

<sup>87</sup> Dig. 22. 6. 9 pr

<sup>88</sup> Buckland, *Main Institutions*, p. 293.

<sup>88a</sup> Dig. 22. 6. 10; 18.

<sup>89</sup> Dig. 12. 6. 65, 9.

<sup>90</sup> Buckland, *ubi sup.*

G. 3. 91.

an obligation (§§ 406, 683, 713). Gaius, after describing *mutuum*, goes on to say: "Another case in which a person is bound *re* is when one has received what was not due to him from another who paid in error; for a *condictio* lies against him with the formula 'If it appears that he ought to give', just as if he had received a loan". Justinian retains the passage, though he was to speak of *indebiti solutio* later on under the rubric of *obligationes quasi ex contractu*.

579. The other cases of quasi-contractual obligation mentioned in the Institutes are those which exist between tutor and pupil, co-owners, co-heirs, heir and legatee. But the phrase admits also of a wide extension to include many cases of unjustified enrichment, of which *indebiti solutio* is merely one example. These cases are distinguished by particular names, *condictio ob causam datorum*, or *condictio causa data causa non secuta* (*e.g.*, I make a payment by way of *dos*, but the marriage does not take place); *condictio ob turpem vel injustam causam* (the payment was illegal or immoral—if I am innocent I can recover); *condictio sine causa* (a comprehensive phrase applied to cases other than the above, *e.g.*, when the parties are not agreed as to the *causa*—I intend to lend, you think I intend to give). To these the commentators have added *condictio ob causam finitam* (there was a *causa*, which has ceased to exist<sup>91</sup>—I have gone on paying an annuity not knowing that the annuitant was dead). Finally, there was the *condictio furtiva* (§ 593), distinguished from the rest by the fact that the plaintiff had parted with the property involuntarily. It was an abnormal remedy allowed *odio furum* (§ 593).<sup>92</sup>

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III

#### TITLE XXVII

##### *Of quasi-contractual obligations*

§ 569.

Having enumerated the different kinds of contract, let us now consider obligations which cannot properly be understood to arise from contract, but since they are not substantially delictual may be said to be analogous to contract. 1. For example, if in a man's absence another person has managed his affairs for him, there are reciprocal actions known as actions on the management of affairs (*actiones negotiorum gestorum*), the person whose affairs have been managed having the direct action, the manager of affairs (*negotiorum gestor*) having the contrary action. It is evident that in such cases there is no contractual obligation properly so-called, for these actions

<sup>91</sup> Dig. 19. 1. 11, 6.

<sup>92</sup> G. 4. 4; Inst. 4. 6. 14.

are available when a person without mandate has undertaken another man's affairs, and the man whose affairs are undertaken incurs a liability even though he does not know what is being done. This principle was received into the law from motives of convenience, lest persons who were obliged to go abroad on business at short notice without making arrangements for the conduct of their business at home might find that their affairs had been completely neglected, because no one was likely to attend to them unless he had a legal right to recover what he had spent. But just as one who has advantageously managed another person's business may hold him bound, so he, in turn, is bound to give an account of his administration. He is accountable up to the standard of most exact diligence. It is not enough to use the degree of diligence which he usually exercises in his own affairs if a more diligent person would be likely to manage the business to better advantage.

§ 571.

2. Again, tutors who may be sued in connection with their guardianship cannot be said to be bound by contract, because there is not any contract between guardian and ward, but since they are not liable *ex maleficio*, they seem to be liable *quasi ex contractu*. In this case too there are reciprocal actions; for not only has the ward the *actio tutelae directa*, but the guardian has the *actio tutelae contraria*, if he has incurred expense for his ward's account, or accepted a liability for him, or pledged his own property with a creditor of the ward. 3. Again, if there is community of property without partnership, for example in case of a joint legacy or gift, and one of the parties is liable to the other in an *actio communi dividundo*, because he has taken all the fruits of the property, or because the other has incurred necessary expenses upon it, the obligation is quasi-contractual.

4. The law is the same when in similar circumstances an action for division of the estate (*judicium familiae erciscundae*) is available between co-heirs.

5. Again, an heir is not understood to be bound by contract to a legatee, for a legatee cannot be said to have contracted either with the deceased or with the heir; so the relation is taken to be quasi-contractual.

6. A person who has received a payment made in error of what was not owed, may be said to be liable *quasi ex contractu*. Indeed, so far is he from being bound by contract, that, as observed in an earlier Title, properly considered, he may be said to be bound not by the making of a contract, but by the (purported) unmaking of a contract; for a person who gives money with the design of payment, intends to discharge a contract, not to create one. None the less the person to whom money is paid in error, is bound just as if he had received a loan and may be sued by *condictio*.

§ 575.

3. 14. 1.

7. There are cases in which an undue payment made in error cannot be recovered. The old lawyers laid down the rule that whenever denial of liability has the effect of increasing [*i.e.*, doubling] the amount for which judgment may be given, an undue payment cannot be recovered, as in the case of the *lex Aquilia* and of legacy.

§ 577.



2. 20. 2 The ancients restricted this to the case of legacies of a specific sum left *per damnationem*, but since our constitution has placed all legacies and *fideicommissa* on an equality, we have made this increase correspondingly general, but we do not allow it to all legatees. It is only legacies and *fideicommissa* left to churches and other sacred places which, if unduly paid, cannot be recovered.

### XIX. OBLIGATIONS FROM DELICT

580. Delicts are of two kinds, public and private. The first are crimes, the second torts. They are not mutually exclusive, for the same wrongful act may give rise both to criminal and to civil process. But we are now concerned with delict only as giving rise to a civil action. The Institutes is a treatise on private law. It is only in the last Title of Book IV that something is said about public prosecutions and only in a cursory manner.

581. The Roman law of delict had its roots in a distant past and even in Justinian's system retained many archaic features. In modern systems criminal process is usually directed to punishment, civil process to compensation. It is a peculiarity of the Roman law, that the civil law of delict is largely penal in character. The sum in which a wrong-doer was condemned might exceed and often greatly exceeded an estimate of the damage sustained. It was a fine imposed as a punishment for the wrong, which went, however, not to the State, as in criminal process, but to the injured person.

582. The nucleus of the Law of Delict consists in three wrongs which from the earliest times had given rise to criminal or civil process. These were *furtum*, *injuria*, and *damnum injuria datum*—theft, injury (in a special and technical sense) and wrongful damage to property. Having their origin in the civil law they were greatly modified and expanded by jurists and the praetor. There were many other delicts, civil, praetorian and statutory, but these three, together with *rapina*, a variety of *furtum*, are the only delicts particularly described in the Institutes. We shall pass them in review and then refer briefly to some other delicts which escaped Justinian's attention.

### XX. FURTUM—RAPINA

583. Paulus as cited in the Digest defines *furtum* in the following terms. *Furtum est contrectatio rei fraudulosa lucri*

faciendi gratia vel ipsius rei vel etiam usus ejus possessionisve :  
quod lege naturali prohibitum est admittere.<sup>93</sup>

"Theft is a dishonest handling of a thing with a view to gain either of the thing itself or of the use or possession of it,<sup>94</sup> an action prohibited by the precepts of natural law."

This is repeated in the Institutes with the omission of the words *lucri faciendi gratia*—"with a view to gain". We will consider the elements in this definition. 4. 1. 1.

584. Dishonest. There must be a theftuous intent. *Furtum sine affectu furandi non committitur*. Such an intention cannot be imputed to insane persons and very young children.<sup>95</sup> 4. 1. 7.

handling. There need not be a carrying away or "asportation", as in common law larceny. Each person who successively handles a thing with guilty purpose commits a fresh act of theft. If a person who has received a thing on deposit denies the fact, this does not in itself make him a thief; but he is guilty of theft if he conceals the thing with the design of appropriating it.<sup>96</sup> 4. 1. 6.

of a thing—a movable thing. Some of the old lawyers (Sabinus amongst them) thought that land might be stolen, but this view did not prevail. Things growing on the land, as trees or fruit, or forming part of it, as sand or chalk or minerals, might be stolen.<sup>97</sup> 2 6. 7.

or of the use or possession. The use of a thing may be stolen, as when a depositary uses, or a borrower misuses, a thing deposited or lent. The possession of a thing may be stolen, as when an owner fraudulently resumes possession of a thing which he has given in pledge or takes possession of a thing which is possessed in good faith by a non-owner. 4. 1. 6.

with a view to gain. This seems to be a necessary part of the definition. If intending to cause you loss and with no eye to gain I throw your silver cup into the sea it is not theft.<sup>98</sup> But the requirement of gain is easily satisfied. If I lend to a third person a thing which has been lent to me I commit theft :—

"for there is a kind of gain in making a present of what

<sup>93</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 1. 3.

<sup>94</sup> An alternative translation is "in order to make gain either out of the thing itself or else out of the use or possession thereof" (Jolowicz, *Digest* XLVII, 2 *de furtis*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1940, *ad loc.*). The definition in the Institutes, of course, does not admit of this interpretation.

<sup>95</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 5, 2; Inst. 4. 1. 18.

<sup>96</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 1. 2.

<sup>97</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 25, 2; 52, 8; 58(57).

<sup>98</sup> Dig. 19. 5. 14, 2.

does not belong to me and so putting the person who receives it under an obligation to do something in return." <sup>99</sup>

prohibited by the precepts of natural law. Theft is unreasonable in itself and universally condemned, for, as Cicero says, "Nature does not suffer us to increase our capacities, resources or wealth by despoiling others".<sup>100</sup>

585. There is no theft if the person interested consents to what is done. This is normally the owner, so we are told that theft takes place *invito domino*,<sup>1</sup> though, as we have seen, there are cases in which the owner is himself the thief, to which may be added the case of the owner who "handles" a thing of which another person has the usufruct.<sup>2</sup> There was a difference of opinion on the question whether there was theft when a person with guilty intent appropriated a thing which the owner was willing that he should have. Pomponius thought that it was theft, and, indeed, it does not follow that because you wish me to have you are content that I should take. But Ulpian does not accept this view.<sup>3</sup> Suppose I attempt to induce your slave to steal something from you; he informs you, and you let him take the thing to me wishing to catch me in the act; some of the older lawyers took the view approved by Gaius that you cannot sue me for corrupting a slave, who has not been corrupted, nor for stealing a thing which has not been stolen. Justinian illogically allowed both actions.<sup>4</sup>

586. Kinds of theft. According to Labeo, whose view prevailed, there were two kinds of theft, *furtum manifestum*, and *furtum nec manifestum*. Sulpicius and Sabinus had included in the list *furtum conceptum* and *furtum oblatum* (§ 592), making four in all. But, as Gaius remarks, these two last are names of actions, not distinct kinds of theft.<sup>5</sup>

587. There was much controversy as to the extension to be given to the term *furtum manifestum*. Gaius continues :

<sup>99</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 55(54), 1.

<sup>100</sup> Cic. *de Off.* c. 3.

<sup>1</sup> Inst. 4. 1. 7; Dig. 47. 2. 46, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 20, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Dig. 48. 2. 46, 8.

<sup>4</sup> G. 3. 198; Inst. 4. 1. 8.

<sup>5</sup> G. 3. 183; Inst. 4. 1. 3. The word *furtum* like "theft" in English (see *Oxford English Dictionary*) means both the act of stealing and the thing stolen. *Furtum conceptum* = receiving a theft—*furtum oblatum* = passing on a theft—*furtum prohibitum* (§ 590) = withholding a theft—*furtum manifestum* = theft carried in the hand. Mommsen (*Strafrecht* 750, n. 5) says that it is *durchsichtig* that *furtus* is connected with *fendere* as in *offendere*. I respectfully suggest that it is *durchsichtig* that it is the missing past participle of *leio*.

"Some have said that theft is manifest when the thief is taken in the act; others go further and include the case of his being taken in the place where the theft is committed, for example in the olive garden where he has been stealing olives, or in the vineyard, where he has been stealing grapes, or so long as the thief is in the house, where the theft has been committed; others go further still and include the case of the thief being taken before he has carried the thing away to the place to which he meant to take it; lastly, there are those who say that theft is manifest whenever the thief is seen with the thing in his hands. This view has not been accepted; and the opinion that theft is manifest so long as the thief has not reached his destination cannot be approved because of the great uncertainty whether this is to be taken to be limited to a single day or extended over several days. The point is that thieves often intend to remove the stolen property to another city or to another province. Accordingly, one of the two first-mentioned opinions is preferred, and of them the second is most in favour."

Justinian admits the first three cases and rejects the last, which, nevertheless, recalls the "hand-having thief" of English law,<sup>6</sup> and may be the starting-point of the whole story, as it is of Ulpian's text in the Digest.<sup>7</sup>

588. Any one who helps another to commit a theft is a thief, but his intervention must amount to something more than mere advice.

589. Penalties for theft—Actions. By the Twelve Tables the punishment of manifest theft was "capital", that is to say a free man was beaten and assigned to the person from whom he had stolen. Whether the effect was to reduce him to slavery or to place him in the position of an *adjudicatus* (§ 663) was an open question with the early lawyers. Slaves were beaten and put to death. Afterwards this punishment was disapproved as too severe, and an action for a four-fold penalty was created by the praetor's Edict applicable to slaves and to free men alike. For non-manifest theft the Twelve Tables imposed a penalty of double damages, and this the praetor retained.<sup>8</sup>

The above account is taken from Gaius. The actions were the same in the time of Justinian.

590. There had been other actions or proceedings in the earlier law. Particular interest attaches to the ancient ritual

<sup>6</sup> P. & M. n, 160, 495; Holdsworth, iii, 319.

<sup>7</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 3 pr. *Fur est manifestus . . . qui deprehenditur cum furto.* The qualifications which follow reflect later speculation.

<sup>8</sup> G. 3. 190.

of search, for which parallels have been found in Greek law and other systems. Gaius again is our principal authority :—

Lib. III. 188. "There is also an *actio prohibiti furti* which lies against one who prevents search being made [on the premises] for stolen property."

192. "The *actio prohibiti* for fourfold value was introduced by the edict. The Twelve Tables had not provided any punishment for this offence: all they required was that he who proposed to search another's premises for stolen property should do so naked, wearing nothing but a *linteum* and carrying a platter. and, if he found anything, then according to the Twelve Tables, the case was to be dealt with as one of manifest theft. 193. What this *linteum* was has been doubted; but it seems to have been some sort of cloth or towel worn round the loins for decency's sake. But the whole thing is ridiculous: for he who would prevent a man wearing his ordinary dress from making a search, would equally prevent him when naked, especially as the discovery of a thing when sought for would subject the prohibitor to a heavier penalty. And as regards the platter, whether it be said that its use was enjoined in order that, the hands of the holder being occupied in carrying it, he could not surreptitiously take anything into the premises, or in order that he might place upon it anything found by him, neither reason could be satisfactory when the article sought for was of such a size or nature that it could neither be smuggled into the premises nor put upon the platter. There is no doubt that the law was complied with if a platter was there, no matter of what material it might be." <sup>9</sup>

591. It is plain that this ancient ritual was as much a mystery to Gaius as it is to ourselves. From Aulus Gellius it appears that it did not survive the *lex Aebutia*,<sup>10</sup> which was some three centuries before Gaius, and the Twelve Tables were another three centuries further back. Gaius wrote a commentary on the Twelve Tables, but like other commentators he may have made mistakes. In particular, it is suggested that a householder who resisted search was treated as a *fur manifestus*; hence the fourfold penalty in the later *actio furti prohibiti*.<sup>11</sup> It may be so, but we must concede to Gaius that he knew more about the Twelve Tables than we do. For the rest, speculation has been busy in exploring the origins of the *quaestio cum lance et licio*. Whether the *lanx* was really a

<sup>9</sup> Muirhead's translation. For *linteum*, the reading of the Verona palimpsest, most editors substitute *licium*, following Festus and Aulus Gellius, who speak of search *lance et licio*.

<sup>10</sup> *Noctes Atticae*, 16. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Girard, p. 435.

magic mirror and the *linteum* or *licium* was really a halter to lead away the discovered beast are problems raised by persons of fertile imagination which we are not competent to decide.<sup>12</sup>

592. The other actions mentioned by Gaius are the *actio furti concepti* and the *actio furti oblati*. The first lay against a person on whose premises stolen property was found after search in the presence of witnesses though he were not the thief.<sup>13</sup> The second was available to one on whose premises stolen property was found against another who had given him the thing with the design that it should be found on the plaintiff's premises rather than on his own.<sup>14</sup> These actions, in each case for treble damages, were given by the Twelve Tables and retained by the praetor. Finally, there was the *actio furti non exhibiti* given by the praetor against a defendant who failed to produce a thing sought for and found upon his premises. This action—damages not stated—is recorded by Justinian, not by Gaius. All these actions had passed out of use before Justinian.

4. 1. 4.

593. The *actio furti* in all its forms was a penal action. In addition, the victim of a theft was entitled to recover his property, if he could, from the thief or any third person. For this purpose he had the *actio ad exhibendum*, a personal action for its production; the vindication, a real action available against any person in possession, or who had ceased to possess in bad faith; and the anomalous *condictio furtiva*,<sup>15</sup> a personal action available against thieves and their heirs; for unlike the *actio furti* this action was passively transmissible. . The Roman law did not admit even the limited security which the English law gives to an innocent purchaser in market overt,<sup>16</sup> still less the principle that possession is equivalent to title (§ 259). Consequently an innocent purchaser from a thief could offer no defence to the claim of the true owner. *Ubi meam rem invenio ibi vindico*—"Where I find my property I vindicate it"—is the traditional expression of this principle.

4 1 19.

594. Who may bring the *actio furti*? Any person whose interest it was that the thing should not be stolen. This was usually the owner, but not always. A *bona fide* possessor might bring the action. A usufructuary might bring it, but

4 1 13.

<sup>12</sup> Jois-Kunkel, p. 254, n. 10.

<sup>13</sup> G. 3. 186, 187. The relation of this action to the formal process of search described above is an unsolved problem. Buckl. T. p. 583; M. p. 322; Jolowicz, *Digest XLVII. 2, p. lxxv.*

<sup>14</sup> G. 3. 191

<sup>15</sup> G. 4. 4; Inst. 4. 6 14

<sup>16</sup> S. G. A., ss. 22, 24.

- not to the exclusion of the owner. Each sued to the extent of his interest.<sup>17</sup> The owner might have placed the thing in the hands of another person under contract. Which of them was entitled to sue depended upon the nature of the transaction and the interest, or relative want of interest, of the parties. In the cases in which the other person was answerable to the owner in case of theft, it was his interest that the thing should not be stolen (the commentators call this the negative interest)<sup>18</sup>; the owner on the other hand was considered to be sufficiently protected by his action on the contract, unless the bailee was insolvent, in which case the owner had an interest in suing the thief. In case of pledge, the pledgee as well as the pledgor has a right of action,<sup>18a</sup> because it is more expedient for him to have his real security intact
4. 1. 14. than to sue the pledgor on the contract. If things are placed in the hands of a fuller or tailor under a contract of hire, it is he who has the *actio furti*, provided he is solvent, otherwise it is the owner who sues, "for in this case he is himself interested in the thing being safe". Before Justinian, the same principle applied in the case of loan,<sup>19</sup> but Justinian gave the lender the option of proceeding against the borrower or the thief as he thought best; and having adopted one alternative he was not allowed to change his mind and fall back on the other, except in the case of his having taken proceedings against the borrower without knowledge of the theft. If the borrower was sued upon the contract and satisfied the lender's claim, he was allowed the *actio furti* against the thief. A depositary was not considered to have an interest in the thing not being stolen, because in the absence of guilty intention on his part, he incurred no liability through his failure to restore, and if he was guilty
4. 1. 15. of *dolus* no doubt the risk was his, but he was not allowed to acquire a right of action by his own wrong.<sup>20</sup> The owner, therefore, alone was competent to bring the action.
4. 1. 16.
4. 1. 17.

595. Wide as is the definition of *furtum* given in the text, it is not wide enough to include all the cases which in the Digest are brought under the head of *furtum*, *e.g.*, maliciously summoning a muleteer to Court with the consequence that his mules, left unattended, are lost.<sup>21</sup> The definition speaks of the dishonest handling of a thing. This of course includes a slave as being an object of ownership, but free persons too

<sup>17</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 46, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Jolowicz, p. xxix.

<sup>18a</sup> Ideo autem datur utrique quia utriusque interest. Dig. 47. 2. 12, 2. But the calculation of damages in each case was difficult. Jolowicz, *op. cit.*, p. XL.

<sup>19</sup> G. 3. 206.

<sup>21</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 67, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 14, 3.

could be stolen, a child in the law of Justinian, in the older law also a wife in manu.<sup>22</sup>

596. It must be observed that there could not (in general) be an action of theft within the family circle. A son could not bring an *actio furti* against his father, (unless it were in respect of something included in his *castrense peculium*), nor a father against his son; nor a husband against his wife (or *vice versa*),<sup>23</sup> but, if either spouse had taken the other's property in contemplation of a divorce which actually followed, redress might be claimed in an action which bore the "polite name" of *actio rerum amotarum*—the action for taking things away.<sup>24</sup> 4 1 12.

597. For the praetorian delict *rapina* it is sufficient to refer to the text (Tit. II).

### THE INSTITUTES

#### BOOK IV (TITs. I, II)

##### TITLE I

##### *Of obligations which arise from delict*

In the last Book we explained the obligations which arise *ex contractu* and *quasi ex contractu*. We now turn to obligations from wrongdoing. Of obligations from contract there are, as we have seen, four kinds. But of obligations from wrongdoing there is only one kind, for they all arise *re*, that is from the wrongful act, such as theft, robbery, damage or *injuria*.

1. Theft is the dishonest handling of a thing, either of the thing itself or of the use or possession of it, such action being prohibited by the precepts of natural law. § 583.

2. The word *furtum* is derived from *furvus*, a word which means black, because theft is committed secretly and stealthily and usually by night; or from *fraus*; or from *ferre* in the sense of *auferre*—to carry away, or from the Greek word for thief, which likewise is derived from the verb meaning to carry away.<sup>25</sup> 3. There are two kinds of theft, manifest and non-manifest. The terms *furtum conceptum* and *furtum oblatum* are rather the names of actions connected with theft than distinct kinds of theft, as will be seen below. A manifest thief is not only one who is taken in the act, but also one who is taken on the spot; for example, if a man has stolen in a house and is caught before he has passed out through the door, or if he has been caught in a plantation or a vineyard where § 586.

<sup>22</sup> G. 3. 199; Inst. 4. 1. 9

<sup>23</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 52, 6; 47. 2. 16; 36, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Jolowicz, p. lxxxvii.

<sup>25</sup> This is taken from Paulus (Dig. 47. 2. 1 pr.) who attributes the first etymology to Labeo, the second to Sabinus. *Furtum* looks very much like a past participle of a forgotten verb, an earlier form of *furari* (so *tono* and *sono* in old Latin had third conjugation forms).



he has been stealing olives or grapes. Indeed, the term must be extended to include the thief who is seen or caught with the stolen property in his hands in a public or private place by the owner or by any one else, before he has reached the place where he meant to take and leave it. But if he has taken it to its destination, though he is afterwards caught with the thing in his possession, he is not a manifest thief. What non-manifest theft is may be understood from what we have said already, for any theft which is not manifest is non-manifest.

4. We speak of *furtum conceptum* when in the presence of witnesses stolen property is looked for and found in a person's possession. A special action lies against him, even though he may not be the thief, called the *actio furti concepti*.

*Oblatum furtum* occurs when a person passes on to you stolen property and it is found as just described, that is if he passed it on with the design that it should be found with you and not with him; you have a special action against him, although he may not be the thief, called the *actio furti oblati*. Then there is the *actio prohibiti furti* against the man who has obstructed another who was set on making search in the presence of witnesses. Further, the praetor's edict penalises the man who has not produced the thing which has been sought for and found in his possession. This is the *actio furti non exhibiti*—for not producing the stolen property. All these actions are disused as a consequence of the discontinuance of the ancient ceremonial requisition of stolen property, and it is very evident that any one who with guilty knowledge receives and conceals stolen property is guilty of non-manifest theft.

5. The penalty for manifest theft is fourfold, whether the thief be slave or free; for non-manifest theft twofold.

§ 584.

6. Theft is committed not only when a person removes a thing which belongs to some one else with the purpose of appropriating it, but in general when a person handles a thing which does not belong to him contrary to the will of the owner. Accordingly, theft is committed if a person to whom a thing is given in pledge or by way of deposit uses it, or if a person to whom a thing is lent for use misapplies it to some other use than that for which it was given. For instance, if a person has borrowed plate on the pretext that he was going to ask friends to dinner, and has taken it abroad with him, or if a man has borrowed a horse for riding and has taken it on a distant journey—taken it into battle, to cite the instance given by the ancients. 7. But it is settled that borrowers who apply the things for a purpose other than that for which they were lent, are not guilty of theft unless they knew that they were acting against the will of the owner and that, if he had known, he would not have allowed them to do it. If they thought that he would allow it, they are guiltless. This is a very proper distinction, for there is no theft where there is no theftuous intent.

8. Further, if a person thinks that he is using a thing lent to him contrary to the wish of the owner, but in fact the owner is willing that he should so use it, it is said that there is no theft.

This suggests the following question. Titius tried to suborn the slave of Maevius to steal some things from his master and bring them to Titius. The slave told his master, who, wishing to catch Titius in the act, allowed the slave to take some things to him. Is Titius liable for theft, or for corrupting a slave, or for neither? The old lawyers entertained very different views on this matter, some admitting neither action, others the action for theft alone. But when the question was submitted to us we decided that both actions can be brought<sup>26</sup>, for though the conditions of the *actio servi corrupti* are not present still he tried to corrupt the slave, and it is proper that he should be punished as if he had done so. For, if he escapes, others may attempt the corruption of a more corruptible slave.

9 Sometimes even free persons are stolen, as when a child in power is kidnapped.

10 It may happen that a man steals his own property, as when a debtor dishonestly resumes possession of a thing given in pledge.

11 Sometimes a man is liable for theft, who has not committed § 588 theft himself, as when a theft has been committed with his aid and at his instigation. For instance, some one knocks coins out of your hand in order that another may get away with them, or stands in your way in order that another may steal from you, or drives your sheep or oxen in order that another may intercept them, as in the case put by the ancients of a herd put to flight by waving a red cloth. If anything of the sort is done mischievously and not with the design that a theft may be committed the action should be on the case (*in factum*). If Maevius helps Titius to commit theft, both are liable for theft. Again, it is a case of aiding and abetting if a man puts a ladder to a window, or breaks a window or door, in order that another may commit theft, or lends tools for house breaking, or a ladder to be put against a window, knowing the purpose for which they were borrowed. A person who does not help another to commit a theft, but stops short at advice and encouragement, is not guilty of theft.

12 If children or slaves in power steal from the *paterfamilias* § 596 or *dominus* they commit theft, and the thing taken is a *res furtiva*, and cannot be usucaped until it returns to the owner's power, but there is no *actio furti*, as, indeed there cannot be any other action between the persons concerned, but if a third person has aided and abetted the act, he is liable for theft, for the property has in fact been stolen at his instigation.

13 The *actio furti* may be brought by the person whose interest § 594 it is that the thing should be safe even though he is not the owner, and the owner cannot bring it unless he has that interest. 14 It follows that if a thing given in pledge is stolen the creditor (pledgee) may bring the action even though the debtor (pledgor) is solvent, because it is more to his advantage to rely upon the pledge than to sue the pledgor upon the contract, this is so far the case

that if the pledgor himself steals the thing the pledgee may bring the *actio furti* against him. 15. If a fuller or tailor has received clothes to be attended to in the way of his trade for an agreed reward, and they are stolen, it is he, not the owner, who has the action, for the owner has no interest in the clothes not being stolen, since he can get compensation for their loss in an action on the contract. So, again, a *bona fide* purchaser may maintain the action just as the pledgee may, though he is not the actual owner. The fuller or tailor cannot bring the action of theft unless he is solvent, that is to say, able to pay the value of the clothes to the owner; if he is not, so that the owner cannot get his indemnity from him, it is the owner who brings the action, because in this case he has an interest in the thing not being lost. The same applies if the fuller or tailor is only partly able to pay.

16. The ancients thought that the same principle should be applied when property is lent, for the borrower too is answerable for keeping the thing safe (*necesse habet custodiam praestare*). But by one of our Decisions the law has been altered so that the owner has the option of suing the borrower, or of proceeding against the thief, and if he chooses the one alternative, he cannot fall back upon the other. If he chooses to sue the thief, the borrower is discharged. If he sues the borrower, he cannot go against the thief, but the borrower may. This is on the assumption that the owner knew that the thing had been stolen when he sued the borrower. But if he did not know that the thing was not in the possession of the borrower, or had his doubts about it when he sued the borrower, and afterwards, when he comes to know about it, wishes to drop the action against the borrower and to go against the thief, he is free to do so (unless, of course, the borrower has made good his loss, in which case the owner has no longer any right of action against the thief, the borrower taking his place). If in these circumstances he decides to proceed against the thief, the borrower is discharged from liability, whatever may be the result of the action against the thief, and similarly [if he decides with knowledge of the theft to prosecute his claim against the borrower, he loses his recourse against the thief] whether the borrower is able to pay in whole or only in part.<sup>27</sup>

17. A person with whom a thing is deposited is not liable for safe keeping, but only for *dolus*. Consequently, since he is not liable to make good the loss if the thing is stolen, and, therefore, has no interest in the thing being safe, he cannot bring the *actio furti*. It is the owner who is competent to bring it. 18. The question has been asked whether a child beneath the age of puberty can commit a theft. It has been decided, since theft implies a theftuous intent, that a child is not liable for theft, unless he is very near to puberty and therefore understands that he is doing wrong. 19. The *actio furti*, whether brought for double or for four-fold damages, is concerned merely with the penalty. Apart from this, the owner is entitled to recover the thing or its value. For this

purpose a vindication may be brought against the person in possession of the stolen property, whether the thief or any one else; and a condiction is available against the thief, or his heir, though not in possession.

## TITLE II

### *Of robbery*

A man who takes by force what belongs to another is liable for theft—for who is more completely a thief than the man who robs?—and so robbers are very properly said to be “impudent thieves”. None the less, the praetor has made this delict the subject of a special action called the *actio vi bonorum raptorum*, which may be brought within the year for fourfold damages, after the year for single damages. This action is available even if a single thing is taken, and that of the smallest value. The fourfold damages are not wholly penalty with a further claim for the value of the thing, as in the case of manifest theft, but the fourfold assessment includes the value of the thing, so that it is penal to the extent of three quarters, and the threefold penalty applies whether the robber is caught in the act or not. It would be ridiculous if a robber got off more lightly than an ordinary thief.<sup>28</sup>

1. This action lies only if a person has laid hands on a thing in bad faith. Consequently, if a person erroneously supposing that a thing is his and thinking that the law allows an owner forcibly to resume possession of his property has seized it with that design, he ought to be absolved in this action, and equally so if charged with theft. But to prevent robbers giving free rein to their avarice, imperial constitutions have introduced a better principle, namely, that no one may take forcible possession of movables or live-stock, even though he thinks that the thing belongs to him. Any one who offends against the law, if he is owner, forfeits his ownership, if he is not owner, must give the thing back and pay its value in addition. These enactments have applied the same rule to forcible entries on land, in order to prevent any kind of violence perpetrated under pretext of ownership.<sup>29</sup>

2. In this action the question is not whether the thing is the property of the plaintiff or not. It is enough that it forms part of his belongings. Accordingly if Titius has a thing on loan, or on hire, or as a pledge, or on deposit, so that he has an interest in its not being taken (this is so in the last case if he has undertaken to be liable for culpa), or if he is a *bona fide* possessor, or a usufructuary, or has any other right, so that he has an interest in its not being seized, this action may be said to be available, to recover not the ownership, but the loss which his estate has sustained in consequence of the robbery. And, generally, it may be said that whenever an

<sup>28</sup> This reads like an extract from an earlier author retained *per incuriam* supporting the view that the damages were wholly penal. Cf. G. 4. 8. Papinian says (Dig. 47. 2. 81, 3.), raptor . . . manifestus fur existimandus est.

<sup>29</sup> The latest of these enactments was a constitution of Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius of A.D. 389, Cod. 8. 4. 7.

action of theft is competent if a thing has been taken stealthily, this action is competent if it has been taken violently.

## XXI. INJURIA

598. The history of this delict begins with the Twelve Tables, where it comes into view as an aggression, more or less serious, upon a man's person. The penalty for a maimed limb was retaliation, unless the parties came to a composition—*si membrum rupit, ni cum eo pacit, talio esto* (§ 644)—for a broken bone three hundred asses if the injured person was a free person, one hundred and fifty if he was a slave (In the later law this was a case rather of damage to property). For every other injury there was a uniform penalty of twenty-five asses.<sup>30</sup> There is no record, even legendary, of retaliation having been applied. The pecuniary penalties were arbitrary and became inadequate. The system of fixed penalties gave way to an action in which the praetor fixed the sum up to which the *judex* might condemn (*actio injuriarum aestimatoria*) in view of the circumstances of the case. In particular, higher damages were given if the injury was of an atrocious character. Contemporaneously with, or in consequence of, this development, the meaning of *injuria* was greatly enlarged. No longer limited to physical violence, it came to embrace every kind of wanton aggression upon a man's person or personality.<sup>30a</sup> Essentially, it is an affront, a contumely, which easily passes into the associated wrong of defamation.<sup>31</sup> But they are different. It is one thing to injure my reputation, another to injure my feelings. Wherever the Roman tradition exists, as on the continent and in Scotland and South Africa, both are actionable wrongs. But it is not so in English law. "Our law (said Lord President Inglis in a Scottish case) says that a man may have damages for injury done to his feelings. The law of England repudiates that doctrine."<sup>32</sup>

599. For a general description of this delict it is sufficient to refer to the text. One or two particulars may be mentioned. Since the gist of *injuria* is injury to my feelings, if my feelings are not injured there is no *injuria*. If I do not show resentment it is supposed that I do not feel it. This is what is meant when it is said that the action is destroyed by dissimulation (*haec actio dissimulatione aboletur*), *i.e.*, if the

4. 4. 12.

<sup>30</sup> G. 3. 223; Inst. 4. 4. 7.

<sup>30a</sup> *Omnemque injuriam aut in corpus inferri aut ad dignitatem aut ad infamiam pertinere* (Labeo ait). Dig. 47. 10. 1, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Dig. 47. 10. 15, 27.

<sup>32</sup> *Mackay v. M'Cankie* (1883) 10 R. 537.

victim of the affront conceals his feelings. For the same reason the action is barred after an unusually short time, *viz.* one year.<sup>33</sup> Contrary to the usual rule in penal actions this action is not actively transmissible (No penal actions are passively transmissible). This is because an action for injured feelings must be brought by the person whose feelings are injured, not by his heir.

600. Just as without theftuous intention there is no theft, so in principle there is no *injuria* without injurious intention—*animus injuriæ faciendæ*—*animus injuriandi*.<sup>34</sup> But a man's intentions must usually be inferred, and sometimes conclusively inferred, from what he says and does. This applies particularly when *injuria* takes the form of defamation.

601. It will be noted that a man may suffer *injuria* not only in his own person but in the person of another. An *injuria* offered to a slave, if of an atrocious character or otherwise insulting to the master, gave the master a right of action. A father and a husband might maintain an action in respect of an injury offered to a child in power or to a wife; a father-in-law in respect of an injury offered to his daughter-in-law, wife of a son in power.

602. Condemnation in the *actio injuriarum* involved *infamia*, and compromise of the action had the same effect.<sup>35</sup> But there was always the danger that the action might recoil upon the plaintiff. A wise man would not bring it without good cause. If he did so, he ran the risk of a contrary action by the defendant.<sup>36</sup> Besides the civil action given by the Edict, one of Sulla's laws, the *lex Cornelia de injuriis*, provided a criminal process, in which the penalty went to the prosecutor, if the *injuria* took the form of personal violence or the invasion of a man's house.<sup>37</sup> From the time of Caracalla, if not before, the injured person had the alternative of bringing a civil action based upon the same facts.<sup>38</sup> In the later Empire injuries were punished criminally by extraordinary process and this procedure tended to take the place of the civil action.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Cod. 9. 35 5.

<sup>34</sup> Dig. 47. 10. 26

<sup>35</sup> Dig. 3. 2. 4, 5; 6; Cod. 2. 11(12). 18.

<sup>36</sup> G. 4. 177.

<sup>37</sup> Dig. 47. 10. 5 pr.

<sup>38</sup> Dig. 47. 10. 7, 6: *Posse hodie de omni injuria, sed et de atroci civiliter agi imperator noster rescipit* (Ulpian).

<sup>39</sup> Dig. 47. 10. 45 (Hermogenianus); Inst. 4. 4. 10.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK IV

## TITLE IV

*Of injuries*

§ 598.

In its most general sense *injuria* means anything done contrary to law; in a special sense it means sometimes contumely or insult, sometimes fault (or a faulty act), as the *lex Aquilia* speaks of *damnum injuria datum*, that is loss caused by fault, sometimes it means iniquity or injustice. Thus, if the praetor or judge decides contrary to law we say that the person against whom the decision is given has suffered an injury or injustice.

1. An injury [in the special sense of contumely or insult which is the subject of this Title] is committed not only when a man is struck with the fist, or struck or beaten with a club, but also when an outcry is raised against him, or when one has caused possession to be taken of another person's goods on the false pretext of his being his debtor, or has written or composed or published anything in prose or verse to bring any person into disrepute, or has with guilty purpose procured any such thing to be done, or has pursued a married woman or a young boy or girl, or attempted anyone's chastity; and, in short, it is plain that an injury may be committed in a great variety of ways.

§ 601.

2. A man may suffer an injury not only in his own person, but also in the person of children in his power, or (according to the better and accepted view) of his wife. So, if you commit an injury against a man's daughter, married to Titius, you may be sued not only in the name of the daughter, but of her father and her husband as well. But, conversely, if injury is done to a husband, the wife has no right of action, for it is the business of husbands to defend their wives, not of wives to defend their husbands. A father-in-law may maintain an action for injuries in the name of a daughter-in-law, whose husband is in his power. 3. An injury cannot be committed against a slave. But an injury may be done to a master through his slave, not indeed in the same way as through children and wives, but only if the injury is of an atrocious character and clearly intended as an insult to the master. For example, an action lies if some one beats another person's slave. But if a man abuses a slave or strikes him with his fist, the owner has no action against him.

4. If injury is done to a slave owned in common, it is reasonable that damages should be assessed not proportionately to each owner's share in the slave, but having regard to the personal status of the several owners, for it is their person which is affected by the injury.

5. If Titius has the usufruct of a slave, and Maevius the bare ownership, an injury done to the slave is understood to be directed against Maevius rather than against Titius.

6. If an injury is done to a free man, who is *bona fide* serving you as a slave, you will have no action, but he can sue in his own

name; unless he was assaulted with the design of insult to yourself, for in that case you too can bring the action for injuries. The same applies if another man's slave is serving you in good faith, that is to say, you can bring the action whenever injury was done to him as an insult to yourself.

7. The Law of the Twelve Tables said that injuries were to be punished as follows:—for a maimed limb retaliation; for a broken bone there were pecuniary penalties of small amount in keeping with the prevailing poverty of the time. Afterwards, the praetor permitted any one who had suffered an injury to put a value upon it, so that the judge could condemn a defendant to pay the amount of the assessment or a less amount as he might see fit. The penalties fixed by the Twelve Tables have passed out of use. But the praetorian or honorary penalty (as it is also called) is in use in the Courts. The assessment of the injury rises or falls according to the rank and reputation of the plaintiff; and the same principle is quite properly observed when the immediate victim is a slave, so that the assessment is highest when the slave is a steward, less when he is of middle rank, and least of all when he is a slave of no account or one condemned to wear fetters.

8. There is a *lex Cornelia* too which relates to injuries and gives an *actio injuriarum*. This lies when there is a complaint that a man has been struck or beaten or that forcible entry has been made upon his house. The word house is understood to apply to the house in which a man is living, whether it belongs to him or he has hired it or is occupying it gratis or as a guest.

9. An injury is accounted atrocious either on account of the nature of the act, as if a man is wounded or beaten with clubs; or on account of the place where the injury is committed, for example in the theatre or the forum or in the presence of the praetor; or on account of the person injured, for example, a magistrate, or if a senator is injured by a person of low condition, or a parent or patron by a child or freedman; for the assessment is not the same when a senator or parent or patron suffers injury and when the victim is a stranger to the aggressor or a person of low condition. Sometimes the part of the body affected makes the injury atrocious, as when a man is struck in the eye. In such a case it makes little difference whether the injury is done to the father of a family or to a son in power. In either case the injury will be atrocious.

10. Finally, it is to be remarked that in every case of injury the person who has suffered it may proceed either criminally or civilly. § 602. If he takes civil proceedings an assessment is made as described above and a penalty decreed accordingly. If he proceeds criminally the judge determines the penalty in the exercise of his extraordinary jurisdiction. A constitution of Zeno enacted that *viri illustres* and persons of yet higher rank may bring and defend criminal proceedings for injury through procurators in the manner therein provided.

11. It is not alone the person who has actually done the injury or struck the blow who is liable, but also any one who with evil



intent has effected or procured that some one should strike another in the face with his fist.

§ 599. 12. The right of action is lost if a man conceals his feelings. Therefore if a man "abandons his injury", that is, does not immediately resent it, he may not afterwards change his mind and revive an injury which he has once condoned.

## XXII. DAMNUM INJURIA DATUM

603. Unlike the delicts above described this is statutory. It has its foundation in the *lex Aquilia*, a plebiscite attributed without much reason to the year B.C. 287. The Twelve Tables and subsequent laws had dealt with specific cases of damage to property, but this legislation was abrogated or superseded by the statute, which contained provisions of a more general character.<sup>40</sup> The subject is contained in the first and third chapters of the *lex*, which so far as the text can be inferred from the *Digest* and the *Institutes* were substantially as follows :—

604. Chapter I. Si quis servum servamve alienum alienamve quad rupedemve pecudem occiderit, quanti ea res in eo anno plurimi fuerit, tantum aes ero dare damnas esto.<sup>41</sup>

"If any one shall have wrongfully killed another person's male or female slave or four-footed beast, he be condemned to pay to the owner the highest value in that year."

Chapter III. Ceterarum rerum praeter hominem et pecudem occisos si quis alteri damnum faxit, quod usserit, fregerit, ruperit injuria, quanti ea res fuerit in diebus triginta proximis tantum acs ero dare damnas esto.<sup>42</sup>

"In respect of other things apart from the killing of slave or cattle if any one shall have caused damage to another by wrongful burning, breaking, or spoiling, he be condemned to pay to the owner the value which the thing has had in the last thirty days."

We will speak first of the general principles of liability under the statute and then consider the language of each chapter so far as it calls for comment.

605. To constitute liability under the statute there must be (a) an act, (b) which is wrongful, and (c) causes damage.

606. (a) An act. Mere omission does not render a person liable, but one who assumes to do a thing must, as a rule, carry it through to its proper completion. A surgeon will be liable if after operating he fails to give his patient proper attention.

<sup>40</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 1 pr.

<sup>41</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 2 pr.; Grueher, *The Lex Aquilia*, p. 199.

<sup>42</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 27, 5; Grueber, p. 199. There has been much speculation as to the original character of the statute. The language of the above extracts has plainly been modernised.

607. (b) which is wrongful. The act must be wrongful, that is to say intended or negligent, and without lawful justification or excuse. Any intended or negligent act which causes damage is *prima facie* wrongful. There are many grounds of justification and excuse—self-defence, accident, an authority conferred by law, and others. No liability attaches to a madman or a very young child as being incapable either of *dolus* or of *culpa*.<sup>43</sup> 4 3. 3 & 14.

608. (c) and causes damage. This means a pecuniary detriment consequent upon the act. This may be positive or negative—positive, if my property has ceased to exist, or has been rendered less valuable; negative, if I have lost a reasonable prospect of profit. These kinds of damage are distinguished by the commentators as *damnum emergens* and *lucrum cessans*, which may be rendered “positive damage” and “loss of profit”. The first may be immediate (*e.g.*, my slave is killed or has lost an eye), or consequential (I have lost his services—I have incurred medical expenses—he was one of a troupe of singers and the whole troupe is less valuable in consequence of his death or injury). Where there is no pecuniary loss there is no action. An action does not lie under the statute for striking a slave if his value to me has not been depreciated by the blow. For the same reason there is no action under the statute for trespass to land unattended by damage. 4 3. 10.

609. With regard to the construction of the statute the following points may be noticed. In chapter I:—

killed. This implies an act of direct violence, but the praetor extended it to include any way of causing death.<sup>44</sup>

another person's. Generally the owner is the person who suffers loss, and this is the only case contemplated by the statute, but there were cases in which an owner might himself be liable to an action on the analogy of the statute. These are noticed below.

four-footed beast—See the text.

the highest value in that year. The year was reckoned back, according to the prevailing view, from the date of the fatal injury, not (if later) from the date of death.<sup>45</sup> 4. 8. 1

610. In chapter III:—

apart from the killing of slave or cattle. This is, perhaps, a gloss upon the words “in respect of other things” and not part of the original text of the statute.

<sup>43</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 5, 2

<sup>44</sup> Inst. 4. 3. 16; Dig. 9. 2. 7, 1; 7, 6; 51 pr.

<sup>45</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 21, 1.

burning, breaking or spoiling. The word spoiling (*ruperit*) was widely construed so as to include any damage, however caused.

4. 3. 13

the value. This was construed to mean "highest value", as in chapter I.

4. 3. 15

611. The scope of the statute, as has already appeared, was greatly enlarged by the jurists and by the praetor. The particular contribution of the jurists (apart from the verbal interpretation of the statute) was to extend it, so as to include consequential damages. The result is sometimes surprising. It is plain that "foresee-ability" was not an element in the case. If I kill your slave, who has been instituted heir, and thus make it impossible for him to accept the inheritance by your order, I am liable to you for the value of the lost inheritance. The Digest puts the case of a master, whose slave has been guilty of serious falsification of his accounts. The master intended to examine him under torture with a view to extracting from him the names of his accomplices. I have killed him. Labeo says (and according to Ulpian, "very rightly") that the damages will include the interest the master had in the discovery of the frauds.<sup>46</sup> It is difficult to see how the damage could be assessed, particularly in view of another passage where Labeo and Proculus are quoted as holding that if you have fouled my nets by careless navigation I can get compensation for the value of the nets, but not for the lost catch of fish, for I might not have caught any.<sup>47</sup> Sentimental damages cannot be recovered in this action. "If you kill my slave (says Paulus) I am of opinion that my sentiments are not to be taken into account (as, for example, if one kills your natural son for whom you would willingly pay a high price), but only the market value."<sup>48</sup>

4. 3. 10.

612. The praetor went much further in extending the usefulness of the action. First, he made it available to others than the owner, to the usufructuary, the *bona fide* possessor, the pledgee,<sup>49</sup> but not usually to one who had merely a right *ex contractu*, as a borrower, or a purchaser before delivery. The only exception was the lessee of land, who was given an action in respect of damage to his crop, but conditionally upon giving security to the defendant against further proceedings by the owner.<sup>50</sup> Secondly, the action, which under

<sup>46</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 23, 4.

<sup>47</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 29, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 33.

<sup>49</sup> Dig. 19. 2. 11, 10; 11, 8; 30, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 27, 14.

the statute lay only in case of direct violence by the body to the body (*corpore corpori*), was extended to cases of death or injury caused *corpori* but not *corpore*, and ultimately to cases where the defendant's act caused loss, but inflicted no injury (*nec corpore nec corpori*). Illustrations will be found in the text.

4 3 16.

Lastly, by a still bolder departure from the original purpose of the action the praetor made it available in case of personal injury either to the plaintiff himself, or to children in his power.<sup>51</sup> This must be carefully distinguished from the *actio injuriarum*, for (a) the *actio injuriarum* implies wanton aggression, the *actio legis Aquiliae* lies also where *dolus* is absent if the defendant has been guilty of *culpa*; (b) the *actio injuriarum* is brought for "sentimental" damages, the action on the statute only for "patrimonial" damages, that is for actual pecuniary loss.

613. In all the above cases the praetor is said to allow an *actio utilis* (*quasi ex lege Aquilia*)<sup>52</sup> or an *actio in factum* (*ad exemplum legis Aquiliae*).<sup>53</sup> The phrases seem to be used indifferently. It is only in the Institutes that a distinction is made between (a) the *actio directa*, when the damage is *corpore corpori*; (b) the *actio utilis* (*corpori non corpore*); (c) the *actio in factum* (*nec corpore nec corpori*). The distinction has no practical interest.

614. The *actio legis Aquiliae* was transmissible actively; not passively, unless the action had reached the stage of *litis contestatio* before the death of the defendant. But the author of a wrong was not allowed to make it a source of profit to himself. He was liable, therefore, to make compensation to the extent of his enrichment. This was not an action on the statute, but a *condictio ex injusta causa*, which was passively transmissible.<sup>54</sup>

4. 12 1.

615. The *actio legis Aquiliae* was one of the group of actions in which if liability was denied the damages were doubled—*adversus infitiantem lis crescit*. This taken together with the use of the words *damnas esto* in the text of the law suggests that the original remedy may have been by way of *manus injectio*.<sup>55</sup>

4: 6 19.

616. We have now passed in review the four delicts which Gaius and Justinian enumerate as giving rise to *obligationes ex delicto*. There were many others. Some of these were

<sup>51</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 13 pr.; 5, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 51.

<sup>53</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 53.

<sup>54</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 23, 8; 50. 17. 38.

<sup>55</sup> Girard, p. 441.

survivals from the Law of the Twelve Tables, like the action for cutting trees (*actio de arboribus succisis* (§ 672)),<sup>56</sup> for arson (*actio de aedibus incensis*),<sup>57</sup> for damage done by pasturing cattle (*actio de pastu*),<sup>58</sup> all of which found a serious competitor in the *actio legis Aquiliae*. The *actio de pauperie*, which is referred to the same source, afforded a more general remedy for damage done by animals. Justinian devotes a Title to this subject in the Fourth Book (*infra*, p. 399). Other delicts were of praetorian origin, such as *dolus* and *metus*, giving rise to the *actio doli* and the *actio metus* (§§ 533, 534), and *fraus creditorum*, giving rise amongst other remedies to the action, commonly known as the *actio Pauliana*, to rescind dispositions made with fraudulent intention. To these may be added various statutory wrongs such as forcible entry on land, which has been mentioned in the text in connection with *rapina*. Many obligations originally regarded as delictual came to be regarded as contractual, though retaining sometimes traces of their origin. A conspicuous example is the action for double damages given in the case of so-called *depositum miserabile* (§ 422). Finally, there are the four cases which Justinian brings together under the description of *obligationes quasi ex delicto*. Some account of these will be given below.

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK IV

#### TITLE III

##### *Of the Lex Aquilia*

§ 604

The action for *damnum injuria* is given by the *lex Aquilia*. The first chapter provides that if anyone shall have wrongfully killed another person's slave or beast of pasture he is to be condemned to pay to the owner the highest value in that year.

1. Inasmuch as the law does not speak in absolute terms of a beast, but only of beasts of pasture, we are to understand that it does not relate to wild animals or to dogs, but only to beasts which can properly be said to pasture such as horses, mules, asses, oxen, sheep and goats. The same may be said of swine, for they also may be termed beasts of pasture, for they feed in herds. Aelius Marcianus quotes from the *Odyssey* :—

Od.  
XIII,  
407-8.

"Thou shalt find him sitting by the swine: they pasture by the rock of Corax hard by Arethusa's fount."

2. A man is said to kill wrongfully, if he kills without right.

<sup>56</sup> G. 4. 11: Dig. 12. 2. 28, 6.

<sup>57</sup> Dig. 47. 9. 9.

<sup>58</sup> Dig. 19. 5. 14, 3.

Accordingly, one who kills a robber is not liable, provided that this was the only way of escape. § 607.

3. Nor is a man liable, if he kills by accident, if he is found not to have been negligent; for one is liable under the statute for negligence no less than for wrongful intention.

4. Therefore, if a person is hurling a javelin in sport or in practice and has hit your slave who was passing by, we must distinguish. If the event took place when a soldier was exercising in the Campus or in any other place where such exercises are usual, he is free from blame; but if any one else has done such a thing, he is guilty. The same may be said of a soldier if he was throwing the javelin in a place not reserved for the purpose. 5. Again, if a man who was lopping a tree has let fall a branch and killed your slave who was passing by, if this took place near a public road or a local road, and he did not shout out, so that any one might keep out of the way of the accident, he is in fault; if he shouted out, and the other man did not look out for himself, he is free from blame; and so he is, if he was cutting the tree away from the road or in the middle of a field, though he did not shout out, for a stranger had no right to be in such a place.

6. If a surgeon who has operated on your slave neglects the after treatment and the slave dies in consequence, he is guilty of negligence. § 606.

7. Want of skill is reckoned as a fault; for example, if a medical man has killed your slave by operating unskilfully or giving him a wrong medicine.

8. If your slave has been run over by a team of mules which the muleteer had not the skill to hold back, the man is to blame; and so he is too if he was not strong enough to check them when a stronger man might have done so. The same applies to a horseman, who was unable to hold in his horse either from want of strength or from want of skill.

9. The effect of the words, "the highest value in that year", is as follows:—If some one has killed a slave of yours who today is lame, or has lost an eye, or is otherwise maimed, but who within the year was sound, or of great value, he is liable not for the present value of the slave, but for the highest value in the year. This is why an action under the statute is understood to be penal in character, because a man is liable not merely for the damage he has caused, but sometimes for much more, and so it is settled that the action does not pass against the heir of the wrongdoer, as it would have passed if the amount at issue never exceeded the damage actually sustained.

10. It is settled not from the words of the statute, but from the interpretation which has been placed upon it, that regard must be had not merely to the value, calculated as above, of the slave or beast that has perished, but also to all the further loss which you have sustained in consequence; for example, if your slave has been instituted heir by some one, and he has been killed before he could enter upon the inheritance by your order, account must also be taken

of the value of the lost inheritance. Or suppose one of a pair of mules, or one of a team of chariot horses has been killed, or a slave who was one of a troupe of comedians; account is taken not merely of the animal or slave killed, but also of the depreciated value of the rest.

11. A man whose slave has been killed may besides bringing the civil action also prefer a capital charge against the wrong-doer.

12. The second chapter of the *lex Aquilia* is no longer in use.<sup>59</sup>

13. The third chapter relates to all other damage. So, if a person wounds a slave or beast of pasture, or wounds or kills a quadruped which is not a beast of pasture, as a dog or a wild animal, an action lies under this chapter, and equally so in the case of any other living creature, or inanimate property. The action is given, "if anything is burnt, broken or fractured", though the word "broken" is wide enough to cover all these kinds of damage, for it is construed as meaning spoilt in any kind of way. So the word includes not only burning and fracturing but also tearing, bruising, pouring away, in short any sort of destruction or deterioration; indeed, it has been advised, that if a person has mixed something with another's wine or oil, so as to impair its natural quality, he is liable under this part of the statute.

§ 607. 14. It is evident that under this chapter, as under the first, liability is incurred by *dolus* or *culpa*. But the liability relates to the value not in that year, but in the last thirty days. 15. In this chapter there is no mention of "highest value". But Sabinus held, and rightly, that the assessment should be the same as if the word "highest" had been inserted in the text of the statute. The plebeians, he said, who passed this law on the proposition of the tribune Aquilius were content with having used the word in the first part of the Act.

§ 612. 16. It is settled that an action lies on the statute only if a person has caused damage with his body. Accordingly, if damage is caused in any other way, it is usual to give a *utilis actio*; for instance, if some one shuts up and starves to death another man's slave or beasts; or drives an animal so furiously that it founders; or frightens an animal over a precipice; or persuades another man's slave to climb a tree or go down a well, and the man has been killed or injured. If a person has thrown another man's slave from a bridge or river-bank, and the man has been drowned in the stream, it may be readily admitted that the loss was caused by the wrong-doer's body, and so there is a direct liability under the statute. But if the injury is not caused by the body, nor to the body, but damage is caused in some other way, since it is not a case either for a direct action or for an action on the analogy of the statute, it has been decided that the wrongdoer may be sued by an *actio in factum*; for example, if a man from motives of compassion frees a slave from his fetters, thus enabling him to escape.

<sup>59</sup> As we learn from G. 3. 215 it gave an action for damages against an adstipulator who released the debtor by *acceptilatio* in fraud of the stipulator. See below, p. 400, n. 83.

## XXIII. QUASI-DELICT

617. Justinian enumerates four cases of obligations said to arise quasi ex delicto. The implication seems to be that in all of them the law creates a liability though the defendant may not in fact be to blame. The cases are the following :—

(1) The judge who “makes the case his own” (*si judex litem suam fecerit*) incurs a penalty fixed by the magistrate at discretion. “To make the case your own” is to behave as if you were a party, not a judge; but the phrase came to apply to any irregularity even of the most innocent description. Grave dereliction of duty would also be punished criminally. At the dawn of Roman law the Twelve Tables enacted the death penalty against a judge or arbiter convicted of taking a bribe.<sup>60</sup> From Augustus onwards judges who accepted bribes incurred severe penalties under the *lex Julia repetundarum*.<sup>61</sup>

618. (2) If anything was thrown, or poured, from an upper room, causing bodily injury to a free person passing or standing below, the occupier was liable for double the damage calculated on general principles (*damnum emergens—lucrum cessans*), to the exclusion of damage to the man’s property, e.g. to his clothes, for the Edict said “if he is living and it is averred that he is injured”.<sup>61a</sup> If a free man was killed there was a fixed penalty of fifty aurei; anyone might sue for it, i.e. the *actio* was *popularis* (§ 689), but preference was given to a person interested or to near relatives.<sup>62</sup> There could be no question of damages in this case, for the human body does not admit of estimation.<sup>63</sup>

619. (3) If a thing was kept placed or suspended over a way used by the public, which might cause injury if it fell, there was a penalty of ten aurei, which might be recovered from the occupier in an *actio popularis*.<sup>64</sup> If it actually fell, it was taken to have been thrown down and so came under the case last mentioned<sup>65</sup>; or an action might be brought against the person who put it in the place from which it fell.<sup>66</sup>

620. (4) Ship-owners, innkeepers and stable-keepers were liable for damage or theft committed by slaves or free persons in their employ in the ship, inn or stable. Innkeepers were also liable for the like acts of residents.<sup>67</sup> The action lay for double damages, was therefore penal and not passively transmissible. It must be distinguished from the contractual liability mentioned above (§ 513). The advantage was mainly

<sup>60</sup> *Aul. Gell.* 20. 1. 7.

<sup>61a</sup> *Dig.* 9. 3. 1, 6

<sup>63</sup> *Dig.* 9. 3. 1, 5.

<sup>65</sup> *Dig.* 9. 3. 1, 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Dig.* 44. 7. 5, 6; 47. 5. 1, 6

<sup>61</sup> *Inst.* 4. 18. 11 and Moyle *ad loc.*

<sup>62</sup> *Dig.* 9. 3. 5, 5.

<sup>64</sup> *Dig.* 9. 3. 5, 13.

<sup>66</sup> *Dig.* 9. 3. 5, 12.



with the latter, in which it was not necessary to show that the damage or loss was caused by a person in the employ of the defendant and in the inn, ship or stable. On the other hand in the action *ex contractu receptum* must be proved or inferred. This lay for single damages and, consequently, not being penal, was passively transmissible (§ 685).

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK IV

#### TITLE V

#### *Of quasi-delictual obligations*

§ 617. If a judge has made the cause his own, he does not seem to be properly speaking bound *ex maleficio*. But since he is not bound by contract either and yet seems in a way to have done wrong, though it were by inadvertence, he is deemed to be liable *quasi ex maleficio* and will incur a penalty, which it lies in the discretion of the magistrate to determine.

§ 618. 1. If anything is thrown down or poured out from an upper storey so as to cause damage to any one, the occupier is liable *quasi ex maleficio*, whether the room was his own, or hired, or occupied gratuitously. He cannot be said to be bound properly speaking *ex maleficio*, because, generally, it is some one else, a slave or a free man, who is actually in fault. The case is similar when a person has something placed or suspended over a way frequented by the public, which might cause damage if it fell. There is a penalty of ten aurei. In the case of throwing down and pouring an action lies for double the damage. If a free man is killed, there is a fixed penalty of fifty aurei; if a free man is injured, the judge assesses the damages at his discretion. He must take into account the fee paid to doctors and other expenses of treatment, as well as loss of employment, actual or prospective. 2. If a *filiusfamilias* is living away from his father, and something is thrown down or poured from his apartment, or if he has something placed or suspended which is dangerous, Julian held that no action lies against the father, but that proceedings should be taken against the son. The same should be applied in the case of a *filiusfamilias* who is a judge and makes the case his own.

§ 620. 3. The owner of a ship, or inn, or stable, is liable *quasi ex maleficio* for wrongdoing or theft committed in the ship, inn or stable, provided that it is not committed by himself, but by some one employed about the ship, inn or stable. This action is not based upon contract, and since he is in a way to blame for employing bad men, he seems to be bound *quasi ex maleficio*. In these cases there is an action *in factum*, available to the heir but not against the heir.

## XXIV. NOXAL ACTIONS

621. If a slave, or, before Justinian, a son in power, committed a delict, for which he would have been liable if *sui juris*, an action lay against the dominus or paterfamilias for damages or the surrender of the culprit. So the law is stated by Gaius and Justinian.<sup>68</sup> But the primary duty was to surrender. If the slave or son had died (without fault on the part of the defendant) before *litis contestatio* he was not liable at all.<sup>69</sup> There was no substituted liability to make compensation.

622. The word *nox*, which gives the name to this class of actions, means "mischief" done by a slave or son. It means also the person who does the mischief. Noxal surrender means "handing over the mischief" to the aggrieved person.<sup>70</sup> The proper way of doing this was by mancipation, but tradition followed by usucapion would have the same effect. The slave became the property of the transferee; the son went into his *mancipium*. In the case of the son it was a question between the schools whether three mancipationes were necessary or one sufficient. Sabinus and Cassius took the latter view, holding that the three mancipationes required by the Twelve Tables meant only voluntary mancipationes. From the classical period (perhaps it had always been so) a son remained in *mancipio* only until he had by his labour made compensation for the mischief.<sup>71</sup> At the end of this time he was entitled to be emancipated. Justinian allowed the slave in the same case to demand manumission. This had the singular consequence that a slave who had committed a delict had a chance in this indirect way of obtaining his freedom.

623. Noxal liability is inseparable from the person of the offender (*nox* caput sequitur). If a slave or son who had committed a delict was (in the one case) sold or (in the other case) given in adoption, the noxal action lay against the new dominus or pater. If the slave had been manumitted or the son emancipated the action was no longer noxal, but direct, i.e., lay against the wrongdoer personally. Conversely, if the

<sup>68</sup> G. 4. 75; Inst. 4. 8 pr.

<sup>69</sup> Dig. 9. 4. 39, 4.

<sup>70</sup> The Latin is *noxam dedere*—*noxae deditio*. We find also *noxam merere*—"to commit a mischief"—*noxam sarcire*—"to repair a mischief". The phrase *noxae dedere* (for *noxam dedere*) is a solecism, suggested by *noxae deditio*. Such reflected action of a substantive is not surprising, and in any case it is a question of usage, not of grammatical analysis.

<sup>71</sup> *Coll.* 2. 3. 1 (Papinian).

wrong was committed by a person *sui juris* who afterwards became a slave or (by adrogation) a *filiusfamilias*, the direct action became noxal. In the case of a slave *de facto* control was sufficient to constitute noxal liability. The action might be brought against a *bona fide* or *mala fide* possessor.<sup>72</sup> This was the general rule. But for some reason (perhaps the words of the statute) it did not apply to proceedings under the *lex Aquilia*. In this case the dominus alone could be sued.<sup>73</sup> If the dominus had instigated the delict, or failed to prevent it when he could have done so, he was directly liable on his own account.

G. 4. 81.

624. With *litis contestatio* the defendant's liability underwent a change. From a duty (merely) to surrender, it became a duty to surrender or to compensate. If the slave died the liability to compensate remained. Such at least was the law in the time of Justinian. But it seems that in the time of Gaius a defendant condemned in a noxal action might satisfy the judgment by surrender of a dead slave (if he was not responsible for the death). The text of the palimpsest is at this point for the most part illegible. The fragmentary Autun Gaius continues:—"And not only if he gives the whole body is he set free, but, also, if he gives any part of the body; and the question is raised whether hair and nails are part of the body . . . a dead animal cannot be noxally surrendered" <sup>74</sup>—still less "a hair from the dog that bit you."

625. Noxal surrender was in principle inapplicable to actions on contract, but in the later law a master sued on his slave's contract was sometimes allowed to make noxal surrender, when the same state of facts also gave an action *ex delicto*.<sup>75</sup> The Digest puts the case of a slave who is acting as exercitor of a ship (§ 552) *sine voluntate domini*. Goods placed on board are lost. There are alternative liabilities *ex contractu* from the *receptum nautarum* (§ 513) and *quasi ex delicto* (§ 620). If a plaintiff brings an *actio de peculio* on the contract he must see that the formula is so framed as to give the master the alternative of noxal surrender.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Dig. 9. 4. 13.

<sup>73</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 27, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Girard, *Textes*, p. 366.

<sup>75</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 333.

<sup>76</sup> Dig. 47. 2. 42 and Jolowicz *ad loc.* The action is *de peculio* because the slave is conducting the business *sine voluntate domini*. If he had been acting *voluntate domini* the master would have been liable *in solidum* in the *actio exercitoria*. Dig. 14. 1. 1, 20.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK IV

## TITLE VIII

*Of noxal actions*

For delicts committed by our slaves, such as theft, robbery, *damnum* or *injuria*, noxal actions are given, with the consequence § 621. that if the master is condemned he may either pay the estimated damage or deliver the guilty slave.

1. The word *nox* means the offending body, that is the slave. § 622. *Noxia* means the wrongful act, theft, robbery, *damnum*, *injuria*. 2. It is very reasonable that masters should be allowed to settle any claim by surrendering the delinquent. It would not be fair that they should incur any loss beyond the body of the wrong-doer. 3. If a master is sued in a noxal action on account of his slave, he frees himself by surrendering the slave to the plaintiff. The effect is to divest him permanently of the ownership. But if the slave gets enough money to compensate his new master for the damage he has suffered the praetor will order his manumission without asking for the master's consent. 4. Noxal actions are established by statute or by the praetor's edict;—by statute as in the case of theft by the Twelve Tables, or in the case of *damnum injuria* by the *lex Aquilia*; by the praetor's edict as for example for *injuria* and robbery. 5. Every noxal action follows the person of the delinquent. Thus, if § 623. your slave has committed a delict, so long as he is in your power the action lies against you. If he has come into some other person's power the action is against that person; if he has been manumitted, the action lies against him directly and there is no further question of noxal surrender. Conversely, a direct action may become noxal; for if a free man has committed a delict and afterwards becomes your slave (how this can happen has been explained in the First Book) the action which began by being direct is now a noxal action against you. 6. If a slave commits a noxal act against his master there is no action, for no obligation can exist between a master and a person in his power; consequently, if the slave comes into another person's power or is manumitted no action lies against the new master or the manumitted slave. It follows that if another person's slave commits a delict against you and afterwards comes into your power the right of action disappears because a situation has arisen in which it cannot exist; and if he afterwards quits your power you cannot bring an action. It is just like the case of a master having done some wrong to his slave; even if the slave is manumitted or alienated, he cannot have any action against him. 7. The old lawyers admitted the principle of noxal surrender in the case of children in power of either sex. But modern sentiment has rightly rejected this cruel practice and it has passed entirely out of use. For who would endure to hand over to another a child, particularly a daughter, and to suffer, perhaps, in the person of his son more than the son himself?—and in the case of daughters considerations of

decency condemn the practice. Accordingly, it has been decided that noxal actions are to be given against slaves alone, for we find it many times said by the old commentators that sons in power may be sued directly for their delicts.

## XXV. DAMAGE BY ANIMALS

4. 9 pr.

626. The Twelve Tables gave a general action for damage by quadrupeds, known as the *actio de pauperie*. Pauperies, we are told, means damage done without legal wrong on the part of the doer, and, of course, an animal cannot be said to have done any legal wrong as it is devoid of reason. The action was noxal, and subject to the usual conditions of noxal actions. If the animal died before *litis contestatio* the action failed<sup>77</sup>; if after, the defendant in case of condemnation had to satisfy the plaintiff's claim, the alternative of surrender being gone.<sup>78</sup> The action was given in the case of all four-footed animals and extended as a *utilis actio* to other animals.<sup>79</sup> But the jurists limit it to domestic animals, with a curious disposition to moralise the situation and to treat them (notwithstanding the account just given of pauperies) as responsible beings. Domestic animals were expected to behave decently. If they acted contrary to the nature of their kind they were answerable. It was an excuse that the animal was irritated by some external cause, *e.g.*, a horse stung by a wasp, or provoked by the person attacked, or if it was a question of a fight between animals and the other animal was the aggressor. The same liability did not attach to animals *ferae naturae*. Good behaviour was not to be expected of them. Besides, if they had escaped from captivity—and this would be the usual case—they had no owner and no one was responsible for them. If a wild animal retained in captivity caused an injury some one would usually be at fault; if the victim, he would not be entitled to redress; if the owner of the animal, he could be sued under the *lex Aquilia*. However, the aedilician edict gave an action for damages against any person who kept savage animals near a public road, and Justinian says that the *actio de pauperie* was also available. Another action, also given by the Twelve Tables and noxal, was for damage caused by cattle, whose owner had let them pasture on another man's land (*actio de pastu pecoris*).<sup>80</sup>

4. 9. 1.

<sup>77</sup> Dig. 9. 1. 1, 13.

<sup>78</sup> Dig. 9. 1. 1, 14: *noxae autem dedere est animal tradere vivum*.

<sup>79</sup> Dig. 9. 1. 1, 2; 4.

<sup>80</sup> Dig. 19. 5. 14, 3.

## THE INSTITUTES

## BOOK IV

## TITLE IX

*Of damage by quadrupeds*

Animals are devoid of reason, but if they have caused damage § 626. through wantonness, rage or savagery, the Law of the Twelve Tables gives a noxal action, the effect of which is (for so the law provides) that if they are surrendered the defendant is free from liability: Suppose, for example, some one has been kicked by a horse given to kicking or attacked by a savage bull. This action applies to animals which are moved to do something contrary to their nature. It has no application to animals naturally savage. Consequently, if a bear has escaped from its owner and done mischief, the former owner cannot be sued, for he ceased to be the owner when the animal escaped. The word *pauperies* means mischief caused without legal wrong, for an animal wanting in reason cannot be said to have done wrong. Thus far as concerns the noxal action.

1. It must be further remembered that the aedilician edict forbids us to keep a dog, a boar, a bear, or a lion, near a public road; if this prohibition is disobeyed and a free man is injured, the owner is liable to pay such amends as to the judge may seem equitable, and for any other harm double damages. In addition to these aedilician actions an action de pauperie is also available. For when more than one action can be brought on the same state of facts, bringing one does not exclude recourse to another, particularly if the actions are penal.

## XXVI. PLURALITY OF CREDITORS AND DEBTORS

627. Normally, obligation implies a single creditor and a single debtor; but it may imply more than one creditor or more than one debtor. If A says to M, "Do you promise to give me five aurei?", and before he has answered B says to M, "Do you promise to give me five aurei?", and M answers "I promise to give to each of you", there are two creditors, either of them, but not both, entitled to receive five aurei from M. If M says to A, "Do you promise to give me five aurei?", and before he has answered M says to B, "Do you promise to give me five aurei?" and A and B both say, "I promise" or "We promise",<sup>81</sup> there are two debtors, either of them, but not both, bound to pay five aurei to M. The creditors are described as *rei stipulandi*. The debtors are described as *rei promittendi* or *debendi*. Such a relation

<sup>81</sup> Dig. 45. 2. 4. The question may also be put in the plural "spondetis"? *Ibid.*

may arise not only from stipulation, but from any other contract,<sup>82</sup> by testament,<sup>83</sup> and in various other ways. Each creditor or debtor is said to be entitled or liable in *solidum*, i.e., to the whole. From this the moderns have coined the word "solidarity", which is distinguished as active solidarity in the case of creditors, passive solidarity in the case of debtors.

628. The essence of solidarity is that notwithstanding plurality of creditors or of debtors there is only one matter involved (*una res vertitur*). Consequently, any juristic act which extinguished the right of a single creditor, or the liability of a single debtor, extinguished the rights of all creditors and the liability of all debtors. *Solutio* (§ 638) *acceptilatio* (§ 640) and *novatio* (§ 645) had this effect. So too had *litis contestatio* (§ 694), for it substituted for the original liability the duty to abide the result of the trial (§ 696). But a pact not to sue (*pactum de non petendo*), since it did not extinguish the obligation *ipso jure*, but might be pleaded by way of exception, was, as a rule, limited in its effect to the creditor who gave it and the debtor who received it.

3. 16. 1.  
D. 3. 180,  
D. 45. 2.  
D. 46. 3.  
34, 11.

629. The case of co-delinquents requires separate treatment. As a rule every one of them was as fully liable as if he were the only delinquent, for the law regarded penal actions for delict as cumulative. Satisfaction by one delinquent did not release the others. This applied to the ancient civil law delicts—*furtum*—*injuria*—*damnum injuria datum*.<sup>84</sup> But in the case of the praetorian delicts, *dolus* and *metus*, a tendency manifested itself to regard the action as compensatory rather than penal, with the result that satisfaction by one delinquent discharged the rest. But *litis contestatio* never had this effect. This was the law before Justinian and he left it as he found it.

630. But as regards obligations *ex contractu* Justinian made sweeping changes. First, generalising a practice which

<sup>82</sup> Dig. 45. 2. 9 pr. (Papinian).

<sup>83</sup> Ut puta, si pluribus heredibus institutis testator dixit: Titius et Maevius Sempronio decem dato (*ibid.*); Dig. 30. 8. 1; Lucius Titius heres meus aut Maevius heres meus decem Seio dato.

This case must be distinguished from *adstipulatio*. If two persons by arrangement stipulate independently for the same thing, the second is termed *adstipulator*. Possumus ad id quod stipulamur alium adhibere qui idem stipuletur, quem vulgo *adstipulatorem* vocamus. G. 3. 210. The *adstipulator* was a *mandatary*, though so far resembling a true *correal* creditor that he could discharge the debtor by *acceptilatio* (§ 628); *supra ad Inst.* 4. 3. 12.

<sup>84</sup> Dig. 9. 2. 11, 2: nam ex lege Aquilia quod alius praestitit alium non relevat, cum sit poena; Dig. 47. 2. 21, 9 (*furtum*).

had already been established by law in some cases and which it was matter of daily usage to make a term in contracts, he abolished the consumptive effect of *litis contestatio* (§ 646), thus putting obligations *ex contractu* on the same footing as praetorian obligations *ex delicto*.<sup>85</sup> Secondly, by Nov. 99 he allowed co-debtors, like sureties, the benefit of division, the effect of which was to compel the creditor to divide his claim between co-debtors who were solvent at the time of action and within the jurisdiction. This reduced very much the practical value of solidary obligation.

631. It must be borne in mind that the mere fact that two or more persons were associated as creditors or debtors in respect of the same transaction did not make them entitled or bound in *solidum*.<sup>86</sup> Thus, if A and B agreed to sell or to buy a house for 1,000 aurei, in the absence of expression to the contrary each was entitled to receive or bound to pay 500, and neither was entitled to receive or bound to pay the whole 1,000. The same consequence followed if a man died leaving two or more co-heirs. In the case of the verbal contract (whether reduced to writing or not) the precise form of words employed determined the character of the obligation. Other cases admitted a greater latitude of interpretation.

632. From what has been said, it will be seen that there was a class of cases in which any event which extinguished the obligation as regards one creditor or one debtor, extinguished it as regards all creditors or all debtors, and that there was another class of cases in which nothing but payment or its equivalent had this effect. The current terminology distinguishes them by different names. The first is described as "correality" (from *correus*=co-debtor. Dig. 34. 3. 3, 3), the second as "solidarity" (in a special and limited sense), or simple solidarity.<sup>87</sup>

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III

#### TITLE XVI

#### *Of stipulations which have two creditors or two debtors*

Two or more persons may be parties to a stipulation as creditors § 627. or debtors. They are joint creditors if after they have all put a question to him the person addressed answers "I promise". For

<sup>85</sup> Cod. 8. 40. 28, 2 and 3.

<sup>86</sup> Dig. 45. 2. 11, 1 and 2 (Papinian).

<sup>87</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 349.



example, if two persons stipulate separately and the promissor answers, "I promise to give to each one of you". For, if he promises first to Titius, and then to another person putting the question separately, there will be two separate obligations and no plurality of creditors. There is plurality of debtors if, for example, Titius says, "Maevius, do you promise to give five aurei?", and then [before he has answered] says, "Seius, do you promise to give the same five aurei?", and then each of them separately answers, "I promise".

§ 828.

1. In obligations of this kind each stipulator is entitled to demand, and each promissor is bound to give or do, the whole thing stipulated for. But in each of the obligations there is only one thing involved and either creditor by accepting, or either debtor by making, payment destroys the obligation of all of them, and releases all the parties.

2. Of two promisors one may be bound absolutely, another up to a certain time or subject to a condition; and the time limit or condition which attaches in the one case will not prevent performance being demanded from the one who is bound absolutely.

## XXVII. ASSIGNMENT OF OBLIGATIONS (CESSION OF ACTIONS)

633. The law relating to the assignment of the benefit of obligations took in the main the same course as the Law of Agency. Three stages may be distinguished.

1. In the earliest period the assignment of a right was effected by novation. If A wished to transfer to B his claim against C an agreement was come to between all three parties by which C's liability to A was discharged and replaced by C's liability to B. If, as might be the case, the object was to discharge A's liability to B this was also extinguished by the novation,<sup>88</sup> known in this case as delegation (the creditor-debtor delegates his debtor to his creditor), which had the same effect as payment.<sup>89</sup> This process was open to two objections :—(a) it required the consent of the debtor, (b) it extinguished any real or personal securities which might have been given for the primary debt.

G. 2. 38.

2. The next stage was to employ the machinery of mandate. A gave B a mandate (*mandatum in rem suam*) to sue for and recover in A's name and as A's agent what was due from C. In the period of the formula the intentio was expressed in the name of A, the *condemnatio* in the name of B. But the right which B asserted was still the right of A, and until B made the right his own by *litis contestatio* it was always liable to be destroyed by a settlement between A and

G. 2. 39.

G. 4. 86.

<sup>88</sup> Dig. 21. 2. 68, 1.

<sup>89</sup> Dig. 16. 1. 8, 3.

C; and, further, since B's right to sue C depended upon mandate, if the mandate was determined by revocation or by the death of either party, the assignment lost its effect.

3. Finally, B was allowed to maintain an *actio utilis* in his own name, when the mandate had been determined by death or revocation. But the risk remained that the assignor might demand and obtain payment from the debtor before B had made good his claim. This was overcome by allowing B to secure his position by formal notice of the assignment (*litis denuntiatio*) or by accepting part payment.<sup>90</sup> If after this the debtor chose to settle with the assignor he did so at his peril. As time went on there was an ever increasing number of cases in which the assignee was allowed to sue in his own name without mandate, particularly where there was a legal duty to give the mandate, but these cases, though numerous, remained exceptional.<sup>91</sup>

634. What English lawyers call assignment, in the Roman law and the systems derived from it is termed cession of action or cession of the right of action. The assignor is the cedent; the assignee is the cessionary. In the modern law, mandate being unnecessary, cession is effected by agreement, with or without the handing over of relevant documents of title. But the cessionary's position is not secure unless the debtor has notice, or, at least, knowledge of the cession before he has satisfied the cedent.<sup>92</sup>

635. Cession of actions was open to abuse. Justinian forbade the cession of *res litigiosae*,<sup>93</sup> a term which included rights of action. To prevent speculation in doubtful claims the Emperor Anastasius by a constitution commonly known as the *lex Anastasiana* (A.D. 506) enacted that the purchaser of a right of action might not recover from the debtor more than he gave for it with interest.<sup>94</sup> This ghost of the Roman law, as a Dutch writer calls it, re-emerged in Holland in the curious disguise of the German right of pre-emption (*jus retractus*). In South Africa it has been held to be obsolete by disuse.<sup>95</sup>

636. In principle a debtor could not transfer his liability except by novation. The apparent exceptions belong to the Law of Actions (representation in litigation).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Cod. 8. 41(42). 3.

<sup>91</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 342.

<sup>92</sup> *C. C.* 1689, 1690; *B. G. B.* 398, 407.

<sup>93</sup> Cod. 8. 36(37). 5.

<sup>94</sup> Cod. 4. 35. 22.

<sup>95</sup> Lee, p. 248, n. 1.

<sup>96</sup> Inst. 4. 11.

## XXVIII. HOW OBLIGATIONS ARE DETERMINED

The principal modes of determination are performance, release and substituted agreement.

§. 29 pr. 638. (1) Performance (*solutio*). In the classical period any material satisfaction of the creditor's claim discharged the obligation. But there was probably an earlier stage in which an obligation voluntarily assumed could only be discharged by a reversal of the process by which it was created. Thus obligations contracted *per aes et libram* or *litteris* or *verbis* were discharged respectively *per aes et libram* or *litteris* or *verbis*. As actual payment or performance was not in itself sufficient to effect a discharge, so the fact that payment or performance was not made did not prevent the formal discharge from taking effect. When at a later stage performance was regarded as sufficient to extinguish an obligation, the formal processes retained an independent validity as a means of effecting a release, when a creditor was content to forgo his claim to performance. We return to this subject below.

G. 3 168. 639. The words *solvere—solutio*—are applied to any performance of a contractual<sup>97</sup> or other obligation. Performance may consist in doing the very thing which the creditor was entitled to demand from the debtor and the debtor was bound to render to the creditor or in doing something which the creditor was willing to accept in its place (*datio in solutum*—substituted performance). In the time of Gaius it was a moot question whether (as the Sabinians held) this discharged the obligation *ipso jure*, or (as the Proculians held), merely entitled the debtor to plead the *exceptio doli*, if sued upon the contract. The Sabinian view prevailed. Contrary to the English law, performance might be made not only by the debtor, but by a third party on his behalf, even without his knowledge or consent. Performance by a principal debtor discharged sureties, and performance by a surety discharged a principal debtor (subject, however, to the contrivance mentioned above (§ 562) by which payment by a surety was regarded as a purchase of the creditor's right of action and not as a satisfaction of the debt).

3. 29. 1. 640. (2) Release (*acceptilatio*). Gaius and Justinian describe this as a fictitious payment. If you have promised Titius by stipulation to pay him 500 aurei, and he is willing to release you, you may be set free by a contrary stipulation

<sup>97</sup> Dig. 50. 16. 176: *solvere dicimus eum qui fecit quod facere promisit.*

in which you say to Titius, "Have you received the 500 aurei which I promised you?" and Titius replies "I have received", or "I have received them". This method of discharge applies only to verbal obligations and illustrates the effect of the *contrarius actus* (§ 638). But it might be made available to discharge any other kind of obligation, if the obligation to be discharged was first converted into a verbal contract by novation (§ 645). Gallus Aquilius invented a form of stipulation called after him the *stipulatio Aquiliana* by which all present and future liabilities of B to A might be reduced to a stipulation and then discharged by *acceptilatio*. It seems reasonable to suppose that as long as the contract *litteris* remained in use, it might be similarly discharged by a contrary entry in the creditor's ledger.

641. Gaius mentioned another kind of "imaginary payment" obsolete before the time of Justinian. This is what he says:—

Lib. III. 173. "There is another kind of imaginary payment, namely, by bronze and balance. This is employed in certain cases, for example, if a debt has been contracted by bronze and balance, or if something is owing on a judgment. 174. The process is as follows. There are brought together not less than five witnesses and a balance-holder; then the party who is being discharged should speak as follows. 'Inasmuch as I have been condemned to you (*condemnatus*) in so many thousand sesterces, I loose and free myself from you in respect thereof with this bronze and bronze scale: I weigh out to you this the first and last pound in accordance with the public statute.' Then he strikes the balance with an *as* and gives it to the person by [or from] whom he is being freed, as if in payment.

175. Similarly a legatee by the same process releases an heir from a legacy left *per damnationem* (§ 332) except that instead of using the word *condemnatus*, which is the word pronounced by the judgment-debtor, the heir declares himself to have been *damnatus* by the will. An heir can only be released in this way from what can be weighed or counted, and only if it is of ascertained amount; some think that the same applies to what can be measured."

642. In the above passage we see the process of discharge *per aes et libram* converted from an actual to a fictitious payment. The law passed through three stages. In the first stage the ceremonial and material discharge of the debt coincide. A certain number of pounds of uncoined copper are weighed and given to the creditor in payment. In the second stage a payment in coined money discharges the debt, but a symbolic weighing of the first and last pound is still

necessary to discharge the debtor. Finally, if actual payment is made, nothing more is needed to free the debtor from his obligation, but the ceremony remains available as a formal method of release.

643. Gaius says that this method of release was available in certain cases; he mentions three, *viz.*, when the debt was contracted by bronze and balance, when it was due on a judgment, when it arose out of a legacy *per damnationem*. The principle of *contrarius actus* applies in the first case, but not in the others, and it is not immediately obvious why they are treated in the same way. The explanation seems to be that in all three cases the person of the debtor was pledged to the creditor to secure the debt. A process of release precisely appropriate in the case of the *nexus* was easily extended to the closely related cases of the *judicatus* and the *testamento damnatus*.

644. Another way of release was by informal agreement. From the earliest times this was available to extinguish civil law liability *ex delicto*. Thus the Law of the Twelve Tables said: *si membrum rupit, ni cum eo pacit, talio esto*—"if he has broken a limb, unless he comes to terms with him, let there be retaliation", and this method of release was available, generally, in cases of *injuria* and theft.<sup>98</sup> But an obligation *ex contractu* could not be discharged in this way, until Justinian, applying the principle of *contrarius actus*, allowed contracts concluded by consent, that is the consensual contracts, to be discharged in the same way, provided that the contract was still outstanding on both sides (*re nondum secuta*). If a consensual contract had been executed on one side, or if an obligation had been contracted *re*, the debtor's liability might be novated by stipulation (§ 645) and then discharged by *acceptilatio*. A mere agreement to release the debtor did not extinguish the obligation, but would be construed as a *pactum de non petendo*, and might be pleaded by way of defence; or, as the phrase is, would take effect not *ipso jure*, but *ope exceptionis*.

645. (3) Novation, as the word implies, was the substitution of a new obligation for an old one. It was effected by stipulation and in the older law also by literal contract. It was necessary to its validity that there should be an existing liability civil or natural, arising from any source, and that the substituted liability should be different, but not too different, from the old one. There was no novation if a

<sup>98</sup> Dig. 2. 14. 17, 1.

stipulation merely reiterated a previous stipulation or promised a part of a whole already promised by stipulation. There was no novation if the content of the new obligation was substantially different from the content of the old, though the new obligation might in a fit case be pleaded as a *pactum de non petendo* (§ 730). Finally, as Justinian enacted, there was no novation without an *animus novandi*. Within these limits novation might assume several forms. It might consist merely in the substitution of the formal stipulation for another kind of obligation, as, for example, for a liability arising from a contract of sale. It might vary the substance of an existing obligation, as by adding or taking away a condition or a time limit or a surety. Lastly, it might take the form of substituting a new creditor or a new debtor—"Do you promise to pay me what you owe to Titius?"—"Do you promise to pay me what Titius owes me?" The substitution of a creditor could not take place without the consent of all three parties; but a new debtor might be substituted without the consent of the old one. For, just as I can discharge your debt by payment without your knowledge or consent, so I can discharge it by substituted agreement without your knowledge or consent. It was not necessary that the novating stipulation should be legally enforceable. It was enough that it created a natural obligation, as in the case of a pupillus promising without the *auctoritas* of his tutor. Indeed, the older view was that if the novating stipulation was formally correct it acted automatically to extinguish the old obligation, as in the case mentioned by Gaius of a stipulation for performance after the death of the promisor.<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, a stipulation made with a slave, according to the view which prevailed, had no novating effect, the original obligation remaining intact. If the novation took the form of adding a condition, the novation was only operative if the condition took effect. Servius Sulpicius held that it extinguished the old obligation in any event, and he took the same view with regard to the stipulation of a slave, but Gaius, who records this opinion, adds, "but in both cases the law is settled in the opposite sense".<sup>100</sup>

646. Besides the novation above described, which the commentators distinguish as *novatio voluntaria*, there was another kind of novation, which took effect by operation of law and has been termed *novatio necessaria*. This was a consequence of *litis contestatio*, which novated the pre-

<sup>99</sup> G. 3. 176.

<sup>100</sup> G. 3. 179.

existing obligation, creating a new obligation to accept the result of the sentence, and this in turn was novated by judgment. But the two types of novation differed in their effect. While voluntary novation discharged all collateral securities given in respect of the original obligation, this consequence did not follow from *litis contestatio* or judgment.

647. An obligation might be extinguished in other ways which Justinian does not mention in this context. Such were (a) impossibility of performance, *e.g.*, when the subject-matter perished; but the debtor was liable in damages if he had caused the impossibility or was *in mora*<sup>1</sup>; (b) death of either party, if his obligation was merely personal (not transmitted to heirs), as in *societas* (§ 495) and *mandatum* (§ 503); (c) lapse of time, when this extinguished the right (extinctive prescription, properly so-called) and did not merely bar the remedy (limitation of actions). Which was the effect of the Theodosian long-term prescription (§ 686) is questioned<sup>2</sup>; (d) *confusio*, *i.e.*, when the character of creditor and debtor met in the same person.

648. *Capitis deminutio* extinguished obligations *ex contractu* at civil law, but this was amended by the praetor (§ 102). In Justinian's law it had no such consequence. The effect of compensation or set-off belongs to the subject of civil procedure.<sup>2a</sup>

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK III

#### TITLE XXIX

##### *Of the modes in which obligations are determined*

§ 638.

Every obligation is determined by the performance of what is owed, or if some one with the consent of the creditor performs something else in its place. It makes no difference who performs, whether the debtor himself, or another person on his behalf; for the debtor is released from his obligation if another person performs, whether the debtor knows of it or not, and even against his will. If a principal debtor performs, this releases sureties; and, conversely, performance by a surety releases not only the surety, but the principal debtor as well. 1. Another method of discharge is by *acceptilatio*, or fictitious performance. This takes place as follows:—If something is due to Titius under a stipulation, and Titius is willing to release the debt, he must allow the debtor to use these words:—"What I have promised you have you received?" Titius answers, "I have received it". This method of discharge applies only to obligations contracted *verbis*, not to any other; for it has been considered in harmony with principle, that an obligation

§ 640.

<sup>1</sup> Dig. 46. 3. 107; 45. 1. 82, 1. For *mora*, see p. 288, n. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Girard p. 775.

<sup>2a</sup> See Inst. 4. 6. 39, and comment.

formed by words should be extinguished by words. But what is due from any other cause may be converted into a stipulation, and discharged by acceptilatio. Just as a debt may be satisfied in part, so it may be released in part by acceptilatio.

2. There is a particular kind of stipulation, commonly called the Aquilian stipulation, by which all the debtor's obligations are converted into a stipulation and then discharged by acceptilatio. This stipulation, which novates all pre-existing obligations, was contrived by Gallus Aquilius, and is in the following form:—

“Whatsoever from whatsoever cause you are, shall, or may be bound to me to give or to do, presently or in time to come; whatever I am, or shall be, entitled to claim from you by personal or real action or by extraordinary process; whatever of mine you have, hold, or possess, or might possess, or have fraudulently brought it about that you do not possess; how much so-ever is the value of each of these claims, so much money Aulus Agerius stipulated should be paid to him, and Numerius Negidius promised to pay.” Then, in his turn, Numerius Negidius puts this question to Aulus Agerius. “Whatsoever this day I have promised to you by the Aquilian stipulation, all that have you received?”; to which Aulus Agerius replies, “I have received it,” or “I have credited it as received”.

3. Obligations are also discharged by novation. This takes place, for example, if Seius stipulates from Titius for what you owe to Seius. For the introduction of a new person gives rise to a new obligation, and the original obligation is extinguished by being converted into the later obligation. This is so far the case that, sometimes, the first obligation is extinguished even by a later stipulation which is itself ineffectual. For instance, if Titius stipulates from a pupil acting without his tutor's authority for what was due from you to Titius; in which case Titius loses his claim altogether, for you, the original debtor, are released, though the second obligation is not legally binding. But the law is different if a stipulation is made with a slave, for, in that case, the original debtor remains bound just as if no subsequent stipulation had been made. If the second stipulation is made with the same person (no change of parties taking place), there is no novation, unless the second stipulation introduces some new term into the obligation, for example by adding or taking away a condition, a time limit, or a surety. When we say that the addition of a condition effects a novation, this must be understood to mean, if the condition in fact is realised; if the condition fails to take effect, the original obligation still continues. The old lawyers were agreed that novation only took place when the second obligation was concluded with that design. But there were doubts as to when this purpose was to be inferred, and various presumptions were admitted in various cases. Accordingly, we have made a constitution<sup>2b</sup> which states in the clearest terms that novation is only to take place when the parties have expressly stated that they have made the new agreement with the intention of novating the first. Otherwise, the old obligation

§ 645.



remains in force and the second accedes to it, so that the promisor is bound by both obligations, as prescribed by our constitution.

§ 844.

4. Lastly, obligations contracted by consent alone are discharged by a contrary agreement. Thus, if Titius and Seius have agreed that Seius is to buy property at Tusculum for one hundred aurei, and then, before anything has been done on either side, that is before the price has been paid or the property delivered, the parties agree to abandon the sale, they are mutually released. The same applies to the contract of hire and to all the consensual contracts.

## APPENDIX

### ROMAN LAW AND THE MODERN LAW OF OBLIGATIONS

649. We have come to the end of the Roman Law of Obligations and conclude this Book like the ones which have gone before with some reference to the modern law. It must be brief, for it is plainly out of the question to go into matters of detail. To a large extent the Roman Law is the modern law. If anyone doubts this, a glance at the French Civil Code should carry conviction. For the greater part of the last century this served as a model for codifiers the world over and if later codes have departed from it, it has at least been the point of departure.

Doubtless, in the field of contract there is one great difference between the Roman Law and modern systems. The Roman Law had no law of contract, only a law of contracts (§ 518). In the modern law—with reservations in regard to personal capacity, legality of object and so forth—every agreement intended to create a legal obligation does so. The later Roman Law was moving towards this conclusion and according to Prof. Riccobono had reached it. But the revival of the Roman Law in the eleventh and twelfth centuries meant a throw-back to the earlier law of the Digest. The glossators were preoccupied with the intricate learning of “vestments”, i.e., the question what converts a pact into a contract. Oceans of ink had to be spilt before the “doctors” reached the simple result that *ex nudo pacto nascitur actio*, or in the language of the Scottish adage, “Every paction begets an action”. The practice of the Courts had long anticipated this conclusion. In English Law the doctrine of consideration survived the assault of Lord Mansfield—a Scotsman and therefore a civilian—in *Pillans v. van Mierop*.<sup>3</sup> But today it has few friends and lies under sentence if not of death, at least of amputation.<sup>4</sup>

Civil law systems reproduce the Roman rubric of quasi-contract. This has scarcely been known to English Law except in the pages of authors who endeavour to introduce order into the system,<sup>5</sup> and the

<sup>3</sup> (1765), 3 Burr. 1663.

<sup>4</sup> *Law Revision Committee, Sixth Interim Report* (1937) Cmd. 5449.

<sup>5</sup> “This name we have borrowed though rather in treatises on law than in actual practice, and applied to a similar but far from identical group.” Buckl. & McNair, p. 254.

English Law of quasi-contract, so far as there is one, differs from the Roman Law.

The Roman Law of Delict had a simple beginning in a small number of narrowly defined wrongs. In the course of the ages these have expanded into a compendious theory which meets the demands of modern societies. In South Africa it has been said, "With us all wrongs are either *damna injuria data* or *injuriae proper*".<sup>6</sup> If the learned author had written "almost all" the statement would have been correct.

The French Law has given a strange turn to the term *quasi-délit* by making it mean "an unlawful act which causes damage to another without the intention of hurting him",<sup>7</sup> while *délit* imports intention. This distinction, which seems to have originated with Pothier,<sup>8</sup> is of course wholly foreign to Roman Law.

The French code in two much commented articles declares:—  
Art. 1382. Tout fait quelconque de l'homme qui cause à autrui un dommage oblige celui par la faute duquel il est causé de le réparer.

Art. 1383. Chacun est responsable du dommage qu'il a causé non seulement par son fait mais encore par sa négligence ou par son imprudence.<sup>9</sup>

This is the principle of the *lex Aquilia* (la faute Aquilienne, as it has been called) carried to, or beyond, its extreme consequence. The reader will remember that the Roman statute related only to damage to property and by praetorian extension to damage to the person.

The question whether in English Law there is a Law of Tort, or only a law of torts continues to be the subject of academic debate.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Maasdoorp, *Institutes of Cape Law*, vol. iv, 4th ed., p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Planiol—Ripert (1931) t. I. § 823.

<sup>8</sup> *Traité des Obligations*, § 116.

<sup>9</sup> Art. 1382. Any act by which a person causes damage to another binds the person by whose fault the damage occurred to repair such damage.

Art. 1383. Everyone is liable for the damage which he does, not only by his wilful acts but also by his negligence or imprudence. (Blackwood Wright's translation.)

<sup>10</sup> Winfield, *Text-book of the Law of Tort*, 3rd ed. (1946), p. 13; Pollock, *Law of Torts*, ed. Landon (1939), p. 43; Salmond, *Law of Torts*, 10th ed. (1945), ed. Stallybrass, p. 15.

## BOOK V

## THE LAW OF ACTIONS

650. "An action", says Justinian, "is nothing other than the right of suing before a judge for what is due to us." The phrase is wide enough to include both the law which defines the nature of the remedy appropriate in any given circumstances and the process by which the remedy may be rendered effective. In other words it includes both the law of actions proper and the law of procedure.<sup>1</sup> But the part of the Institutes which is devoted to the subject of actions (Book IV, Tit. VI to the end) is not confined to these topics. It includes also much that belongs to the substantive law, as, for example, the liability of fathers and masters in respect of the contracts of sons in power or slaves.

651. HISTORY OF ROMAN CIVIL PROCEDURE.—The history of Roman Law from the Twelve Tables to Justinian from the point of view of procedure falls into three periods:—

- I. The period of the *legis actiones*;
- II. The period of the formulary procedure;
- III. The period of the extraordinary procedure.

We shall consider these in order, and distinguish in each period:—

- (A) the process by which a defendant is brought before the Court;
- (B) the trial of the action;
- (C) the execution.

## I. THE LEGIS ACTIO PROCEDURE

652. (A) SUMMONS.—In the earliest times it was left to the plaintiff to get his man before the Court in any way he could. The process is prescribed by the Twelve Tables in the terse staccato language characteristic of this enactment:—

"If he calls him to Court, he must go: if he does not go, call witnesses: then seize him: if he evades or flies, lay hand on him: if he is sick or old, give him a vehicle: if he does not choose, need not provide a carriage."

This simple method of procuring attendance—if the plaintiff was strong enough to compel it—was still in theory in use in the latest days of the Republic, as appears from

<sup>1</sup> Buckl. *M.*, p. 363.

what Horace tells us of his providential escape from the bore who attached himself to him on the Sacred Way.<sup>2</sup> But the practice was for the defendant to give security for his attendance before the Court (*vadimonium*),<sup>3</sup> and there were means of punishing him if he evaded arrest.

653. (B) TRIAL.—The trial of an action was a matter of solemn formality. In this period, as in that which followed, the procedure took the form of a judicial arbitration in which the question to be referred was settled in the presence of a judicial officer, normally the praetor, and was then referred to a single judge (*judex*) or arbiter, or to a board of judges (*recuperatores*) or to a standing college of judges (*centumviri*, *decemviri*).<sup>4</sup> The first stage of the proceedings was said to take place in Court (*in jure*), the second before the judge (the normal case)—*apud judicem*—*in judicio*. The preliminary proceedings *in jure* assumed one of several forms, which gave names to different *legis actiones*, *viz.*, *sacramenti*, *per judicis postulationem*, *per conductionem*. There were two other *legis actiones* of which we shall speak later, *viz.*, *per manus injectionem* and *per pignoris capionem*. They were not modes of trial, but regulated methods of self-help. The term *legis actio*, Gaius tells us, was employed either because the actions were fixed by statutes, or because they were adapted to the words of statutes and therefore were adhered to as immutably as the statutes themselves. When Gaius speaks of statutes, he must be understood to refer particularly to the Law of the Twelve Tables; but it must not be concluded from this that the *legis actiones* (or some of them) had not a remoter origin in customary law. G. 4. 11.

654. *LEGIS ACTIO SACRAMENTI*.—This took its name from the money staked as a wager, which was a cardinal feature of the proceedings, and was known as *sacramentum*. The word evidently has a religious significance. The sum of the wager, forfeited by the party found to be in the wrong, was anciently devoted to religious purposes, later went to the public chest. But there is reason to think that at a still earlier period the word *sacramentum* meant, not a thing staked as a wager on the result of litigation, but an oath by each party as to the justice of his cause, involving a penalty to be paid to the G. 4. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Sat.* 1. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Horace again may be cited:—

"Ille datis vadibus qui rure extractus in urbem est  
Solos felices viventes clamat in urbe."

(*Sat.* 1. 1. 11—12.)

<sup>4</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 614; *M.* p. 374.

offended deity if the oath was found to be false.<sup>5</sup> Combined with this was a symbolic fight followed by a reference to arbitration. The whole procedure has been characterised by Sir Henry Maine as "a dramatisation of the origin of justice".<sup>6</sup> It brings into close association three distinct methods of redress—the appeal to arms and self-help, the appeal to the divine power, the appeal to civil justice.

- G. 4. 13. 655. Unlike the other two modes of trial, the *legis actio sacramenti* was of general application. It was employed both when the plaintiff's claim was in *rem*, *i.e.*, to assert ownership (or a servitude) and when it was in *personam*, *i.e.*, to enforce an obligation, and in the first case whether the thing claimed was movable or immovable.

- G. 4. 16. 656. In actions in *rem*, if the thing claimed was a slave or other movable property, the proceedings were as follows :—

(a) The parties, A and B, appear before the praetor (*in iure*), each armed with a rod (*festuca*) representing a spear (*quiris* or *hasta*), the symbol of *quiritary* ownership. The thing in dispute, for example, a slave, is present in Court.

(b) A, grasping the slave, says : "I say that this man is mine by *quiritary* title according to his cause as I have spoken look you I have laid my rod upon him".<sup>7</sup> Then he touches the slave with his *festuca*. B says and does the same. This mock fight was called *manum conserere*—*manus consertio*.

(c) The praetor says : "Both let the man go".

(d) A says : "I demand of you whether you say for what cause you have vindicated". B replies : "I exercised my right as I laid on my rod".

- (e) A says to B : "Since you have vindicated without right I challenge you with a *sacramentum* of fifty asses". B replies in like terms : "And I challenge you". The amount of the *sacramentum* was five hundred *asses* if the property in question was worth a thousand *asses* or more, otherwise  
G. 4. 14. fifty *asses*. This was so provided by the Twelve Tables. But if the question at issue was a man's liberty the amount was always fifty without regard to the value of the alleged slave. This provision was made in favour of freedom.

<sup>5</sup> Girard, p. 1047.

<sup>6</sup> *Ancient Law*, chap. x.

<sup>7</sup> I have purposely omitted punctuation. The formula admits of different interpretations. Muirhead translates, "I say that this man is mine in *quiritarian* right, on the title I have already explained; behold, I have laid my *vindicta* upon him." Poste translates: "This man I claim as mine by due acquisition, by the law of the *Quirites*. See, as I have said, I have put my spear (*vindicta*) on him."

(f) The parties then proceed to the sacramentum, originally an oath; later, a deposit by each of the amount of the penalty (to be returned to the innocent party, forfeited by the guilty party (*infra*)); later, reciprocal promises by stipulation with a pledge of land by third parties (*praedes*) to secure performance.<sup>a</sup>

(g) The praetor awards interim possession of the thing in dispute to one or other party, who furnishes a similar security for the restoration of the res and the mesne profits, if he fails to establish his claim (*praedes litis et vindiciarum*).

(h) The praetor then remits the case to the judex (or otherwise, as the case may be). Anciently the judex was nominated forthwith, but a lex Pinaria of early date provided that the parties should reappear before the praetor on the thirtieth day for the purpose.

G. 4. 15

(i) The judex having been nominated, each party gives the other notice to appear before him on the third day following. This adjournment was called *comperendinatio* from *comperendinus dies*—the third day following, *i.e.*, the day after the morrow.

(j) On the third day each party states his case (*causae coniectio*) and, if necessary, supports it by argument (*causae peroratio*) and evidence.

(k) Finally, the judex adjudicates upon the issue submitted to him, which may involve matter of law as well as of fact, and by his *sententia* decides in favour of one or other litigant. This he does, not directly, but indirectly, by adjudging the sacramentum of one or the other to be *injustum*. This meant originally that he had taken a false oath; later, that he had lost his wager and forfeited the penalty.

657. Such was the procedure when the action was in rem and the thing in issue was a slave or other movable. If it was an immovable it was symbolically transported to the Court.

“If the thing was of such a character that it could not conveniently be carried or brought into Court; for example, if it was a column or a ship, or a herd or flock, part of the whole was taken and brought into Court, and then vindication was made of the part as if the whole had been present in Court; thus a single sheep or goat from the flock was brought into Court, or a hair from an animal was taken and brought into Court. If the subject of dispute was a ship or a column, some piece was broken off. Similarly, if the controversy related to land or houses or an inheritance, a piece was taken and brought into Court, and vindication was made of the part just as if the whole

G. 4. 17.

<sup>a</sup> Buckl. *T.*, p. 611.

G. 4. 17.

were present in Court; for example, a sod was taken from the land, or a tile from the house, and similarly if the controversy related to an inheritance, some thing or part of a thing belonging to the inheritance was taken."

658. This is the account of the procedure given by Gaius. But there was an earlier period when the mock fight took place on the land; and there was an intermediate or alternative procedure, in which the parties present in Court made a pretence of leaving the Court, fighting on the land, and coming back to have the issue decided by the pacific method encouraged or imposed by the State (*ex jure manum conserere*). In other respects too it is not to be supposed that the procedure remained unchanged through the centuries. It became stylised and may have been in part unintelligible even to the people who employed it.

659. As remarked above, the *legis actio sacramenti* was of a general character and available for actions in *personam* as well as for actions in *rem*, but an unfortunate lacuna in the Verona palimpsest leaves us uninformed as to the way in which the procedure was adapted to this purpose.

660. *LEGIS ACTIO PER JUDICIS POSTULATIONEM*.—The same uncertainty and for the same reason existed with regard to the *legis actio per judicis postulationem*. But unexpected light was thrown upon it by the Gaius fragments discovered in 1933.

The relevant passage runs as follows:—

Lib. IV. 17 (a). "The *actio per judicis postulationem* was brought if there was a statute commanding this mode of procedure, as the Twelve Tables did in the case of a claim based upon stipulation. The proceedings were more or less as follows:—The plaintiff said: 'I say that by your solemn promise (*ex sponsione*) you ought to give me ten thousand sesterces. I demand of you, do you admit it or deny it?' The defendant said that he ought not to give. On that the plaintiff said, 'Since you deny, I ask you, praetor, to give a *judex* or *arbiter*'. Consequently, in this kind of action a man might deny the plaintiff's claim without incurring a penalty. The same statute directed that proceedings for the division of an inheritance between co-heirs should be conducted in this way; and the *lex Licinnia*<sup>9</sup> did the same in the case of the *actio communi dividundo*. So the plaintiff named the cause for which he brought his action, and an arbiter was immediately asked for."

<sup>9</sup> There is a reference to this statute of unknown date in Dig. 4. 7. 12.

661. **LEGIS ACTIO PER CONDICTIONEM.**—The gap in the palimpsest extends to part of the passage dealing with the *legis actio per condictioem*, and this too is usefully supplied from the same source. The relevant text (new and old) runs as follows :—

17 b. Proceedings by *condictio* were taken in this way:—  
 “I say that you ought to give me ten thousand sesterces”—I ask, “Do you admit or deny?” The defendant said that he ought not to give. The plaintiff said:—“Since you deny, I summon you for the thirtieth day to have a judge appointed.” Then the parties had to be present on the thirtieth day for the appointment of a judge. In the old language *condicere* means “to give notice”; 18. so this action was properly termed a *condictio*, because the plaintiff used to give notice to the defendant to appear on the thirtieth day for the appointment of a judge. But nowadays we improperly give the name “*condiction*” to the action in *personam* in which we allege that something should be given to us, for there is no notice given in the modern procedure 19. This action was created by the *lex Silia* and the *lex Calpurnia*, by the *lex Silia* for a certain sum of money, by the *lex Calpurnia* for every [other] certain thing. 20. Why this action was required when a claim for what ought to be given to us could be brought either by *sacramentum* or by asking for a judge, is much discussed.

662. It is probable that the two *legis actiones* described in the foregoing sections were, to quote Prof. de Zulueta, “just a rationalisation of the older procedure” in the *actio sacramenti in personam*. They both had the merit of avoiding the formalities of the sacramental wager and the forfeiture of a penal sum to the State. But the question mentioned by Gaius which was “much discussed” must have been too intricate to admit of an “obvious explanation”. The dates of the *lex Silia* and the *lex Calpurnia* are unknown.<sup>10</sup>

663. (C) **EXECUTION. LEGIS ACTIO PER MANUS INJECTIONEM.**—The *iudex* was powerless to give effect to his sentence, nor did the *praetor* undertake to do so. This task devolved in the earliest period of civil procedure upon the litigant himself, and took the form of the *legis actio per manus injectionem*. This was a proceeding which took place in *iure*, *i.e.*, before the magistrate, and must be distinguished from the extrajudicial arrest above described. The process was as follows. The presence of the defendant having been procured by persuasion or force, the plaintiff said to the defendant: “Inasmuch as you have been adjudged to me for ten

<sup>10</sup> Buckl *T.*, p. 617.



thousand sesterces and have not paid, I lay hand upon you for a judgment of ten thousand sesterces". With that he laid hand on some part of his person.

G. 4. 21.

664. The defendant might not resist arrest on his own behalf, since judgment had already been pronounced against him. He must either. (a) satisfy the judgment (or furnish security which the plaintiff was willing to accept); or (b) find a *vindex*, prepared in a separate suit to contest the validity of the judgment, who, if he lost, would be cast in double damages with the ultimate menace of *manus injectio* against himself, the effect of his intervention being to set free the original debtor.<sup>11</sup> If the defendant could do neither of these things the creditor might take him away and keep him in confinement and bonds. This followed (probably) upon a formal *addictio* by the magistrate which made him not yet a slave, but on the way to become so (*adjudicatus*).

665. So much and no more we are told by Gaius. For further particulars and the sequel we turn to the Twelve Tables, and to the exposition of its provisions which Aulus Gellius, a man of letters contemporary with Gaius, puts into the mouth of Sextus Caecilius, an eminent jurist of the time.

"When a debt is confessed or judgment has duly been pronounced, thirty days must be allowed. After that let putting on of hand take place (*post deinde manus injectio esto*). Let him take him before the Court. If he does not satisfy the judgment, and if no one comes forward as *vindex*, let him lead him away. Let him bind him with cord or fetters fifteen pound weight, not heavier; if he chooses, lighter. If he chooses, he may live at his own cost. If he does not live at his own cost, the man who shall have him bound, shall give him pounds of corn day by day. If he chooses he may give him more."

666. At this point Aulus Gellius takes up the story :—<sup>12</sup>

"Meanwhile there was the right of coming to terms; if they did not come to terms, they (*i.e.* the debtors) were kept in chains for sixty days. During these days they were brought before the praetor in the *comitium* on three successive market days and proclamation was made of the amount of the judgment. On the third market day they were put to death or sold away from Rome across the Tiber."

667. If there were several creditors they were entitled to

<sup>11</sup> Buckl. T., p. 621.

<sup>12</sup> *Noctes Atticae*, 20. 1. 46

share in the liquidation of the corpse. The climax is recorded in the language of the statute:—

“On the third market day let them cut the shares. If they have cut too much or too little, be it free from blame.”

The last words anticipate and avoid the point made by Portia in “*The Merchant of Venice*”:—<sup>13</sup>

“Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.  
Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less, nor more.  
But just a pound of flesh: if thou tak'st more,  
Or less, than a just pound, be it but so much  
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,  
Or the division of the twentieth part  
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn  
But in the estimation of a hair,  
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.”

668. As we have seen, the Twelve Tables (so far as they are preserved to us) admit the process of *manus injectio* in two cases, confession and judgment. Confession may perhaps be taken to include the case of the debtor who offered no defence (*indensus*). But *manus injectio*, as appears from the form of words recorded by Gaius (*quod tu mihi iudicatus sive damnatus es*), applied also to the *damnatus*, a term which may have included the nexal debtor (§ 507), the heir liable to a legatee by the legacy per *damnationem* (§ 332), and other cases.<sup>14</sup> Gaius tells us that in many cases a *manus injectio pro iudicato* was given by special statutes, as by the *lex Publilia* against a debtor for whom another person had bound himself as surety by *sponsio* if he failed to reimburse him within the six months next ensuing, and by the *lex Furia de sponsu* against a creditor who had exacted from one of several co-sponsors more than a rateable share of the debt (§ 566). G. 4. 21. G. 4. 22.

669. In these cases *manus injectio* was applied with all its vigorous consequences. In other cases a modified process was allowed called *manus injectio pura*, *i.e.*, *non pro iudicato*, in which the defendant might, if he chose, defend himself, so that there was no need to invoke the aid of a *vindex*. But if he had no defence to offer the process of execution took its normal course. Of this kind were the actions given by the *lex Furia testamentaria* against one who, not being an excepted person under the statute, took more than a thousand *asses* as legacy or gift *mortis causa* and by a *lex Marcia* to recover usurious interest from moneylenders (§ 341). A *lex Vallia* (between 204 G. 4. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Act IV, Scene 1—as judicial assessor, not as advocate. Pollock, *Essays in the Law*, p. 198.

<sup>14</sup> Girard, p. 511; Buckl. T. p. 620; M. p. 377.

and 169 B.C.) made all *manus iniectionis pura* except in the case of the *judicatus* and of the principal debtor under the *lex Publilia*.

G 4 25.

670. Such was the procedure under the Law of the Twelve Tables. But from the earliest times of which we have any record it was mitigated. The insolvent debtor was not sold into slavery or put to death. The creditor might still, if he pleased, keep him in chains. This method of execution upon the person continued in force during the whole of the classical period of Roman Law and even until Justinian, the debtor being kept a prisoner until he had satisfied the debt, or compensated for it by his labour.

671. *LEGIS ACTIO PER PIGNORIS CAPIONEM*.—There does not seem to have been during the *legis actio* period any method of execution against the debtor's property. There was, however, a fifth *legis actio*, which, as it did not imply any pre-existing judgment, cannot be described as a mode of execution. This was *ignoris capio*, or distress. It was given to a limited number of privileged creditors and only in relation to claims of a public or sacral character. This is what Gaius has to say about it :—

26. "The *legis actio per ignoris capionem* rested in certain cases on custom, in certain cases on statute. 27. It was introduced by custom in respect of military matters, for a soldier might levy a distress for his pay on the person whose duty it was to distribute the money, if he failed to do so. Money given to soldiers for their pay was called *aes militare*. Again, he might levy a distress for the money with which he was to buy his horse. This was called *aes equestre*. Again, he had the same recourse for the money with which he was to buy barley for his horse. This was called *aes hordearium* (*hordeum*=barley). 28. *Ignoris capio* was introduced by statute, for example, by the Law of the Twelve Tables against the man who had bought a victim and not paid for it and against one who did not pay the hire of a beast which another person had let to him on hire for the purpose of applying the hire money for the expense of a sacrifice. Again, the regulations of the censors gave a right of distress to farmers of the public revenue of the Roman People against persons who were liable for taxes under any statute. 29. In all these cases the distress was levied with certain formal words, and for this reason it was generally held that this process, too, was a kind of *legis actio*; but some thought differently first, because the distress was effected *extra jus*, that is, not before the praetor, and, usually, in the absence of the debtor, whereas other actions took place before the praetor, the defendant being

present; secondly, because a distress might be made even nefasto die, that is on a day on which it was not allowed to conduct statute process".

We are not informed as to the details of this procedure, whether, for example, the debtor had any means of impeaching the legality of the distress, or of recovering his property in the event of his satisfying the debt.

672. The system of the *legis actiones*, Gaius tells us, G. 4. 30. became odious owing to its excessive technicality and formalism. He cites the case of a plaintiff who, suing a defendant for cutting his vines, lost his case because he used the word "vines" when he should have said "trees", for the Law of the Twelve Tables, which gave the action, spoke in general terms of "trees" (*actio de arboribus succisis*). G. 4. 11. In consequence, "the statute actions were abolished by the *lex Aebutia* and the two Julian laws, and it was brought about that we should litigate by written instructions to the *iudex*, that is by *formulae*". Unhappily, we know little about the *lex Aebutia* beyond what Gaius tells us. It is thought to have been enacted about B.C. 120. The *leges Juliae* were no doubt the *leges Juliae iudicariae* of Augustus (B.C. 18). It is not necessary to conclude from what Gaius says that the formula was not in use before the *lex Aebutia*. It may be that the statute was a legislative recognition of a method of procedure which had already found its way into the practice of the Courts.<sup>15</sup>

673. In two cases alone, Gaius tells us, the *legis actio* procedure survived the *lex Aebutia*, namely *damnum infectum* and proceedings before the *centumviral* Court. This was a Court consisting of 105 members (three from each of the thirty-five tribes) which exercised a concurrent jurisdiction in *petitio hereditatis* and other civil law causes, on a reference from the praetor urbanus or peregrinus, the proceedings in *jure* being by *legis actio sacramenti*.<sup>16</sup> The *legis actio* procedure in *damnum infectum* was in practice superseded by the praetorian jurisdiction exercised by means of *missio in possessionem* and the *cautio damni infecti* (§§ 759, 760), a process at once more convenient and more satisfactory. There was a technical survival of the *legis actio* in the fictitious process of *manumissio vindicta* (§ 67) and in *jure cessio* (§ 153). G. 4. 31.

674. Different views have been advanced as to the origin

<sup>15</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 382.

<sup>16</sup> Girard, p. 1038. Under the Empire the number was increased. The Court continued in existence until about A.D. 200. Girard, p. 1059, n. 4.

of the formulary system of litigation. It has been surmised :— (1) that it arose under the *legis actio* procedure in connection with the *legis actio per conditionem*; (2) that it was introduced by the praetor peregrinus for the use of foreigners resorting to his Court; (3) that it was an institution of provincial, particularly Sicilian, origin, and perhaps ultimately derived from Greece.<sup>17</sup> These views are not mutually inconsistent. It is obvious that, as soon as the issues raised in an action became at all complicated, they must have been reduced to writing, to aid the memory of the parties to the *litis contestatio* (§ 694), whose business it was to inform the *judex* of the matter in question between the parties. It is equally obvious that the praetor's jurisdiction was extensive enough to admit of considerable adaptation to changing circumstances without the need of legislative enactment.

675. The formulary procedure retains the fundamental character of the *legis actio* procedure of being a reference to arbitration. There is the same division of the proceedings into proceedings *in jure* and proceedings *apud judicem*. Only, instead of the terms of reference being rigid and inelastic, expressed in an invariable spoken ritual, they admit of the most various expressions in a written formula (*concepta verba*) settled by agreement of the parties with the concurrence of the praetor. But the range of choice was not unlimited. It was essential that the praetor should give an action. The actions which he had at his disposal were set forth in his Edict, accompanied by pattern formulae. The character of the formula was determined by the character of the action.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF ACTIONS

676. At this point it will be convenient to consider the various classifications of actions made by the Roman Law. Logically, this should have preceded the topic of procedure, but, as most of them only came into existence, or at all events assumed importance, in the period of the formula, it has seemed best to reserve the subject for treatment in this connection. What follows is in the main based upon Justinian's Title *de Actionibus* (IV. 6), which should receive careful attention.

677. Actions *in rem*—actions *in personam*—*i.e.*, brought against a thing or against a person. Actions *in rem* were brought to assert ownership or to assert or deny a servitude (*actio confessoria*—*actio negatoria* or *negativa*).<sup>18</sup> This last

<sup>17</sup> Girard, p. 1055. There are other theories. Buckl. T. p. 629.

<sup>18</sup> G. 4. 3; Inst. 4. 6. 1—2.

action seems anomalous, but was really a vindication with a denial of the servitude.<sup>19</sup> The scope of the action in rem was wider than appears from the Institutes. It included the action brought by an heir to establish his right to an inheritance (*hereditatis petitio*) and actions brought to establish status (*vindicatio in libertatem—vindicatio in servitutem*). In fact, all actions which were not in personam seem to have been in rem. Justinian himself refers to this head praejudicial actions, that is actions brought to establish a question of status as a preliminary to further proceedings, *e.g.*, the question whether such a person is free or slave.<sup>20</sup> 4. 6. 13.

678. It was characteristic of actions in rem that the defendant was not named in the intentio, only in the condemnatio (§ 708), whereas in personal actions the defendant was named in both. Consequently, personal actions in which (exceptionally) the defendant was not named in the intentio were said to be in rem scriptae<sup>21</sup>—inscribed in rem. Such were the *judicia divisoria* and the *actio metus*.

679. Civil actions, praetorian actions.—This division is historically important, but does not touch the nature of the claim. Actions descended from the civil law, or created by statute, were civil. Actions introduced by the praetor's Edict were praetorian (honorary). Both classes of action might be either in rem or in personam. 4. 6. 3.

680. The praetorian actions were either adaptations of a civil law action or new actions for which there was no civil law precedent (§ 681). The adaptation consisted either (1) in the insertion of a fiction in the formula, or (2) in naming one person in the intention, another in the condemnation. (1) A familiar instance of the use of a fiction is the *actio Publiciana* in rem given to the bonitary owner (§ 140) with an instruction to the *judex* to find for the plaintiff if it appeared that he would have been owner, if the period of usucapion had run its course. Another is the *hereditatis petitio possessoria* (§ 373), brought by the bonorum possessor with a fictitious allegation of heirship. Yet another is the *actio Pauliana* in rem, given to recover property alienated in fraud of creditors on the assumption that alienation had not taken place. As instances of the use of a fiction in personal actions may be cited the *actio furti* and the *actio legis Aquiliae* brought by 4. 6. 4. G. 4. 34. 4. 6. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 676: *M.* p. 161.

<sup>20</sup> These actions appear to be actions in rem in the modern sense, viz., actions "directly determining the status of property or persons" (*Halsbury—Hailsham*, vol. 1, § 84). The Roman vindication no less than actions in personam merely tended to a decision *inter partes*.

<sup>21</sup> Dig. 4. 2. 9, 8.

- G. 4. 37. or against a peregrinus with a fictitious assumption of citizen-  
 G. 3. 84; ship; the action given against the adrogatus as if adrogation  
 4. 38 had not taken place (§ 102); the action given to or against  
 the purchaser of an insolvent estate (§ 736), with a fictitious  
 G. 4. 35. assumption of heirship (actio Serviana). (2) The substitution  
 of one name for another in the condemnation served various  
 purposes :—(a) Representation in litigation. The name of the  
 representative was substituted for the name of the person in  
 whose name the action was brought or defended. Thus : “ If  
 it appears that Numerius Negidius ought to give ten thousand  
 G. 4. 86. sesterces to Publius Mevius, judge, condemn Numerius  
 Negidius [to pay] ten thousand sesterces to Lucius Titius : if  
 it does not appear, absolve him ”. Here, Lucius Titius repre-  
 sents the plaintiff. If he represented the defendant the  
 formula would conclude “ condemn Lucius Titius to pay to  
 Publius Mevius ”, etc.; (b) In the so-called *actiones adjecticiae*  
*qualitatis* (§ 547) the name of the agent appeared in the  
*intentio*, the name of the principal in the *condemnatio*;  
 (c) The same contrivance was employed in the *actio Rutiliana*  
 (so called after the praetor Publius Rutilius, who is credited  
 with inventing the process), in which the purchaser of an in-  
 solvent estate “ names the insolvent in the *intentio* and  
 substitutes his own name in the *condemnatio*, requiring the  
 G. 4. 35 defendant to restore, or to pay to him, what belonged to or  
 was owed to the insolvent ”. This was the appropriate action  
 if the insolvent was alive; the *actio Serviana*, if he was  
 dead (§ 736).

681. Actions with a formula in *jus concepta*—actions  
 with a formula in *factum concepta*. The first asserted a  
 civil law right either in *rem* or in *personam*. The typical  
 action in *rem* was the vindication with the formula : If it  
 appears that [the thing in question] belongs to [the plaintiff]  
 G. 4. 41 by quiritary right—*si paret . . . ex jure Quiritium Auli*  
*Agerii esse* (§ 707). In personal actions the normal form  
 was : “ If it appears ” or “ whatever appears, that defend-  
 ant should give or do ” — “ *si paret* ” or “ *quicquid*  
*paret . . . dare facere oportere* ” (§§ 711–714). An action with  
 a formula in *jus concepta* did not lose its character as such by  
 being manipulated by the praetor in the ways above described  
 (§ 680). An action with a formula in *factum concepta*,<sup>21a</sup> on  
 the other hand, was a praetorian creation, which had no civil  
 law prototype. The formula directed the judge to condemn  
 if he found facts to which the praetor attached a right of

<sup>21a</sup> Termed for short “ *actio in factum* ”; but in a larger sense “ *actio in factum* ” includes also “ *actio utilis* ” (§ 682). Jolowicz, p. 213. n. 3.

action. The action would at first be given in a particular case and ultimately, if such cases became frequent, be embodied in the Edict, thus becoming a "praetorian action" in the technical sense (§ 679). Not technically, but in fact, actions in factum also may be distinguished as in rem and in personam; though if the praetor wished to give a new action in rem he usually adapted a civil law action as in the *actio Publiciana* (§ 680). An action in rem of wholly praetorian creation was the *actio Serviana* (to be distinguished from the *actio Serviana* mentioned above), by which a hypothecary creditor obtained possession of the subject of the pledge (§ 247). There were many personal actions in factum, such as the *actio de peculio*, the *actio de pecunia constituta*, the *actio jurisjurandi*, and a great number of penal actions, such as the action given against a freedman or son who had taken proceedings against his patron or *paterfamilias* without the praetor's permission. In the older law the praetor gave actions in factum against a person who being duly summoned neither appeared nor found a *vindex* and against a person who forcibly rescued a person summoned to appear.

682. *Actio directa—actio utilis*. This distinction is rather descriptive than technical. An *actio utilis* was an adaptation or extension of an existing action,<sup>22</sup> sometimes contrasted as the *actio directa*. The basic action might be civil or praetorian. But the description "*actio utilis*" is usually applied to a modification of a civil law formula (§ 680) or to the application of a civil law formula to a new state of facts or to persons not primarily entitled to make use of it. In the course of these pages we have met with many instances: the *utilis actio* given to creditors of the *adrogatus* (§ 102), the *utilis vindicatio* of the original owner of a canvas upon which another person has painted a picture (Inst. 2. 1. 34), the *utilis actio* given to and against a *fideicommissarius* (§ 351), the *utilis actio legis Aquiliae* (§ 613), and the *utilis actio* occasionally allowed to the cessionary of a right of action (§ 633. See also §§ 554, 555, 626). If something was poured or thrown from a ship (not from a house) *utilis actio* lay against the master.<sup>22a</sup> This was an extension of an *actio in factum*.

683. *Actiones or judicia stricti juris—bonae fidei*. This is a classification not of all actions but of personal

<sup>22</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 687; *M.* p. 368. *Utilis* is variously rendered "adapted", "modified", "equitable", "analogous", etc. Perhaps it is best left untranslated.

<sup>22a</sup> Dig. 9. 3. 6, 3.



actions in *jus*, "though in many respects the rules of real actions resembled those of *stricta judicia*".<sup>23</sup> The principal *actio stricti juris* was the *condictio*, a general term with many applications. It might be brought for a certain sum of money (*condictio certae pecuniae*), or for some other certain thing (*condictio triticaria*), or to assert an illiquid claim (*condictio incerti*) (§§ 710-713). The various forms of *condictio* were also distinguished according to the cause which gave rise to them, as *condictio furtiva*, *condictio indebiti*, and others mentioned above in speaking of *obligationes quasi ex contractu* (§ 579).<sup>24</sup> Another *stricti juris* action was the *actio ex testamento* brought to enforce a legacy. The *bonae fidei* actions, which were numerous, included actions brought upon all the real contracts other than *mutuum*, on the consensual contracts, on *negotiorum gestio*, on the *judicia divisoria*, as well as the *actio tutelae*, the *actio praescriptis verbis*, and some others.<sup>25</sup> Justinian, while abolishing the *actio rei uxoriae*, anomalously retained its *bonae fidei* character in the *actio ex stipulatu*, by which he replaced it (§ 213).

4. 6. 29.

684. It was characteristic of the *bonae fidei* actions that the formula instructed the *judex* to ascertain what the defendant ought to do or to give *ex bona fide* and to condemn accordingly. This allowed him to take equitable defences into consideration and made it unnecessary for the defendant to raise them expressly by way of plea (*exceptio*), as was necessary in the *stricti juris* actions. The most important equitable plea was the *exceptio doli*, and accordingly the rule was that in *bonae fidei* actions the *exceptio doli* was implied—*bonae fidei judiciis exceptio doli inest*. So was the *exceptio pacti conventi*.<sup>26</sup> There were many other distinctions between the two types of action.

685. Actions *rei persecuendae gratia*—*poenae persecuendae gratia*. Actions may be, and most often are, directed to getting something which belongs to the plaintiff, or to redressing an unlawful disturbance to his detriment of the economic balance. In such cases he may be said to be claiming something which is or ought to be his. The action is brought for a *res*. Such actions are reparative, or, as the technical term is, "*rei-persecutory*" in character. Other actions, though they may incidentally compensate the plaintiff and, perhaps, do no more, are considered to have for their object the punishment of the defendant; that is, they

<sup>23</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 364.

<sup>25</sup> *G.* 4. 62; *Inst.* 4. 6. 28.

<sup>24</sup> Buckl. *T.* 682; *M.* 366.

<sup>26</sup> *Dig.* 24. 3. 21; 30. 84. 5; 18. 5. 3.

are penal in character. It is irrelevant that the penalty may be placed to the credit of the plaintiff and not of the State. The principal distinction between the two classes of actions was that actions of the first class were, with few exceptions, both actively and passively transmissible, *i.e.*, passed to heirs of plaintiff and of defendant; penal actions, on the other hand, were, as a rule, actively transmissible, but not passively, though the heirs might be held liable to the extent of their enrichment. All actions *ex delicto* were penal, even if, as in the *actio doli*, they only led to compensation.<sup>27</sup> But Justinian makes a new distinction. If the plaintiff was entitled to claim recompense apart from the action *ex delicto*, as in case of theft, the action was merely penal; if the action *ex delicto* included a claim for compensation, as in the case of *rapina*, the action was mixed. 4. 6. 19. For the same reason he describes as mixed the action for double damages given in the case of *depositum miserabile* (§ 422), and the *actio legis Aquiliae*; in this last case, not only because the damages were doubled in the case of denial (§ 615), but also because the measure of damages being the highest value in the last year, or thirty days, a plaintiff might in fact recover much more than compensation for his actual loss. But this seems to depart from the original nature of the distinction, which depended rather upon the purpose of the action than on its consequence.

686. Temporal—perpetual. Some actions could only be brought within a limited time, others without limit of time. Actions of the first class were termed temporal, actions of the second class perpetual. Most civil law actions were perpetual. Most praetorian actions were temporal, and, in fact, annual. But there were many exceptions. Theodosius II imposed a general period of prescription of actions of thirty years (with longer periods in exceptional cases). After this, a perpetual action meant an action which was so prescribed. 4. 12 pr.

687. The distinction between actions transmissible and not transmissible has been mentioned above (§ 685).

688. *Judicia legitima* (statutory proceedings)—*judicia imperio continentia* (proceedings depending upon the jurisdiction of the praetor). This distinction belongs to the old law. The first class included cases which came before a single *judex* in the city of Rome or within the first milestone, the parties being Roman citizens. All other cases depended upon the jurisdiction of the praetor, which means that they could not be prolonged beyond the year of office of the praetor who gave the action, and ceased to be valid when the year

<sup>27</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 370

was over. There were procedural differences into which we need not enter. The distinction has nothing to do with the nature of the claim, which in either case might be a civil law action in rem or in personam or a praetorian action in factum.<sup>28</sup>

689. *Actio popularis*—*actio privata*. There were cases in which in the public interest any member of the public was allowed to sue for a penalty, which he either kept for himself or divided with the State. Actions of this character were called *actiones populares*.<sup>29</sup> We have met with instances in the actions given for *res dejectae* and *res suspensae* (§§ 618, 619). It was a contrivance to supplement the very inadequate criminal law. If the plaintiff brought his action in his own particular interest the action was private.

690. The term mixed action (*actio mixta*) is used in a variety of senses :—(1) as above, of an action directed to obtaining both redress and a penalty (§ 685); (2) of the *judicia divisoria*. Justinian described these as mixed because, as he says, they are both in rem and in personam (Inst. 4. 6. 20). The semblance of truth in this is the fact that they may end either in adjudication, which is a mode of acquisition (§ 168) or in a pecuniary condemnation, or in both. But they were essentially personal actions, at all events under Justinian; (3) Ulpian uses the term in yet another sense.<sup>29a</sup> He says that mixed actions are those in which each party is plaintiff, and instances the *judicia divisoria* and (using the word action in a wide sense) the double interdicts (§ 753). As to the first, the description may be justified by some peculiarity in the formula of these actions, the structure of which is unfortunately matter not of knowledge but of speculation.

691. The above description of the different kinds of action and their various classification may serve as an introduction to the second period of Roman civil procedure, the period of the formula, which we shall now consider, distinguishing, as before, the process of procuring attendance, the trial, and the execution of the judgment of the Court.

## II. THE FORMULARY PROCEDURE

692. (A) SUMMONS.—In principle the old process of in *jus vocatio* remained in force. But in practice it was usual for the defendant to give by stipulation, with or without sureties,

<sup>28</sup> G. 4. 103.

<sup>29</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 694; *M* p. 371.

<sup>29a</sup> Dig. 44. 7. 37, 1.

an undertaking to appear. This was called *vadimonium*.<sup>30</sup> If the defendant kept out of the way to avoid arrest, the praetor gave a *missio in possessionem* (§ 759) of his goods with ultimate sale, and there were other methods of compulsion.

693. (B) TRIAL.—The cardinal feature remained the division of the proceedings into the two stages of *in jure* and *apud judicem*. The procedure retained the character of a reference to arbitration, which could only run its normal course with the consent and co-operation of both parties.

694. (i) PROCEEDINGS IN JURE. — Both parties being present, or represented, before the praetor, the plaintiff stated the nature of his claim and asked for an action. It lay in the discretion of the praetor to give or to refuse it. If the issue was simple and unquestioned the action was given as of course and *litis contestatio* followed immediately. But whether an action should be given and what action should be given were questions which might lead to protracted argument and to the production of evidence by both parties to the litigation. If, in the event, the praetor refused any action at all, or any action which the plaintiff was willing to accept, the matter was at an end; though, it seems, the plaintiff, if so advised, might make a fresh attempt before another, or even before the same, praetor. If, on the other hand, subject to the direction and approval of the praetor, the parties agreed upon the issues to be referred, it remained for them to embody their agreement in a formal document and to choose the *judex*. This document was the formula. It was probably executed in duplicate, and sealed by the parties and by witnesses. The plaintiff handed one copy to the defendant which the defendant accepted. This was the *litis contestatio*. It concluded the proceedings *in jure*. A document framed in identical terms was issued to the *judex* by the praetor as his authority to act.<sup>31</sup> The reference might be not to a single *judex*, but to a board of *recuperatores* or to a standing college of judges (§ 653).<sup>32</sup>

695. The effect of *litis contestatio* was to freeze the plaintiff's right as at that moment. Apart from the extraordinary remedy of *restitutio in integrum* (§ 758) he could not in any subsequent proceeding revert to the situation as it was before this event. This would be contrary to the principle that the

<sup>30</sup> Girard, p. 1062.

<sup>31</sup> Wenger, *Institutionen des Römischen Zivilprocessrechts*, p. 130 ff.

<sup>32</sup> *Recuperatores* means "recoverers". They were not necessarily drawn from the panel of judges. Buckl. T. p. 636; M. p. 384.

same matter cannot be litigated twice—*ne de eadem re bis sit actio*. As the law is stated by Gaius, *litis contestatio* in some cases extinguished the pre-existing right *ipso jure*, in others grounded the *exceptio rei in iudicium deductae*.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the plaintiff's right was defined and fixed as it was at the moment of *litis contestatio*. Subsequent events did not affect it. From this the Proculians drew the conclusion that even satisfaction of the plaintiff's claim after *litis contestatio* would not affect his right to have the plaintiff condemned if the *iudex* decided that the right existed when the issue was framed. The Sabinians took the contrary view expressed in the maxim "All actions admit of absolution"—*omnia iudicia absolutoria esse*<sup>34</sup>; and this doctrine prevailed. Another consequence of *litis contestatio* was to render transmissible actions otherwise intransmissible, and there were others besides.

696. All this assumes the presence and co-operation of the parties. But there are other situations to be considered. The defendant might :—(1) fail to put in an appearance, or refuse to go to trial on the action given by the praetor; or (2) admit the plaintiff's claim in whole or in part. In the first case he was said to be *indefensus*, in the second case *confessus*. Either event interrupted the normal course of litigation with different, and, in each case, various consequences.

697. If there was no defence in a real action the praetor might allow the plaintiff to take, or might put him into possession of, the subject of his claim; and there was the *actio ad exhibendum* for its production and, in default, for its full value. Alternatively, and in all personal actions, the praetor would give *missio in possessionem* of the goods of the defendant with ultimate sale.<sup>35</sup>

698. If the defendant in a liquid money claim admitted his liability the effect was the same as if judgment had been pronounced against him.<sup>36</sup> This goes back to the Twelve Tables in which *aeris confessi* are associated with *iudicati* as liable to immediate *manus injectio* (§ 665) and the later law asserts the principle *confessi debitores pro iudicatis habentur*.<sup>37</sup> But this is not so simple as it seems. If the subject of the litigation was a *res* or an *incertum* a reference

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<sup>33</sup> G. 4. 106.

<sup>34</sup> G. 4. 114; Inst. 4. 12. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Wenger, p. 104.

<sup>36</sup> Wenger, p. 110.

<sup>37</sup> Paul. *Sent.* 5. 5a, 2.

to a *judex* might still be necessary to assess the admitted liability.<sup>38</sup>

699. (ii) *PROCEEDINGS APUD JUDICEM*.—These take the same general course as the proceedings in *jure*, but with an important difference. Before the *praetor*, the plaintiff's task was to show that he had a case to go to trial; before the *judex* he must show that he is entitled to a decision in his favour. Speeches are made by advocates. The parties and their witnesses are heard. The opinions of jurists (*responsa prudentium*) may be put in, in support of a legal argument. The *judex* is armed with the necessary authority to exercise an effective control over the proceedings. Finally, he pronounces his finding, which must answer the question posed in the formula. This is his *sententia*—an opinion, not a judgment. It cannot in itself be the basis of a decree in execution. The process of execution will be described below. Condemnation was always in a sum of money. Decrees of specific performance were unknown. There was no appeal from the sentence of the *judex*.<sup>39</sup> Very occasionally the *praetor* would cancel it by giving *restitutio in integrum*. If it was formally irregular it was treated as a nullity. G. 4. 48

### THE FORMULA

700. We now turn to a description of the formula, which, varying with the circumstances, was determined in each case by the cause of action, and in turn determined the character of the sentence. At the head of the formula stands the nomination of the *judex*. After this come the "parts" or clauses of the formula: *viz.*, 1, *demonstratio*; 2, *intentio*; 3, *adjudicatio*; 4, *condemnatio*. All of these may be described as usual, in the sense that they commonly occur. There were, besides, two other clauses, which were only employed in special circumstances, *viz.*, *praescriptio* and *exceptio*. These will be explained later. Our knowledge of the structure of the formula is mainly derived from Gaius, with whose aid we are able to piece together some typical formulae. He describes the parts of the formula as follows:— G. 4. 39.

701. The demonstration is the part of the formula which is placed at the beginning to indicate the matter in issue, as, for example: "Inasmuch as Aulus Agerius has sold a slave to Numerius Negidius"; or "Inasmuch as Aulus Agerius has deposited a slave with Numerius Negidius". G. 4. 40

<sup>38</sup> Wenger, p. 111.

<sup>39</sup> Wenger, p. 201. This seems to have changed under the Empire to some extent. *Ibid.*

G. 4 41. 702. The *intention* is the part of the formula in which the plaintiff embodies his claim; for example: "If it appears that Numerius Negidius ought to give ten thousand sesterces to Aulus Agerius"; or, "Whatever it appears that Numerius Negidius ought to give to or do for Aulus Agerius"; or, "If it appears that the slave belongs to Aulus Agerius by *quiritary title*".

G. 4 42. 703. The *adjudication* is the part of the formula which gives the *judex* authority to adjudicate a thing to one of the litigants; for example, if proceedings are taken between joint-heirs for the division of the inheritance (*actio familiae erciscundae*), or between co-owners for the division of property owned in common (*actio communi dividundo*), or between neighbours for the ascertainment of boundaries (*actio finium regundorum*). The formula runs: "So much as ought to be adjudicated, do you, judge, adjudicate to Titius".

G. 4 43. 704. The *condemnation* is the part of the formula by which the *judex* receives authority to condemn or absolve; for example: "Judge, condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius in ten thousand sesterces, if it does not appear, absolve"; or "Condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius in not more than ten thousand sesterces"; or simply, "Judge, condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius", without more.

G. 4. 44. 705. Gaius goes on to say that these clauses do not occur in every kind of formula. Some occur, others not, according to the nature of the action. In a small class of cases the *intentio* stands alone; namely, in the proceedings which are known as *praejudicia*, directed to the ascertainment of a preliminary question of fact, *e.g.*, whether such a person is slave or free, or what is the amount of a *dos*. In such cases the whole formula will be: "Be Titius judge whether this man is free (or slave)"; "Be Titius judge what the *dos* amounts to". The demonstration is a clause of great importance which occurs in personal actions in *jus* with an *intentio incerta*, *i.e.*, in two classes of cases, namely, *bonae fidei* actions and the *actio ex stipulatu* (§§ 714, 713). It invariably begins with the word *quod*—"whereas", or "because". The *intentio* seems to be a necessary ingredient in every formula. Except in the *praejudicia*, it always begins with the words *si paret*—"If it appears"—or, *quicquid paret*—"Whatever appears". The *adjudicatio* is met with only in the so-called *judicia divisoria* enumerated in the text. The *condemnatio* is common to all formulae except the *praejudicia*. It may be *certa*, in which the *judex* is instructed, if he condemns, to condemn for a certain amount, or *incerta*, in which the amount of the condemnation is left to his discretion, or *incerta cum taxatione*, which leaves him free to condemn up to, but not beyond, a stated limit.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> G. 4 49—51.

706. We will now give some illustrations of the formulae in the usual classes of action, *viz.*, I. Civil law actions in rem; II. Civil law actions in personam; III. Praetorian actions in factum.

707. I. CIVIL LAW ACTIONS IN REM.—The most typical of these is the vindicatio. The formula is as follows:—

“Titius iudex esto: si paret fundum Cornelianum quo de agitur ex jure Quiritium Auli Agerii esse, neque is fundus arbitrato tuo Aulo Agerio restituetur, quanti ea res erit, tantam pecuniam, iudex, Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio condemna, si non paret, absolve.”<sup>41</sup>

“Be Titius judge: if it appears that the Cornelian estate, now in question, belongs to Aulus Agerius by Quiritary title, and the said land shall not to your satisfaction be restored to Aulus Agerius, at what sum soever the amount shall be assessed, in so much money, judge, condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius: if it does not appear, absolve.”

708. A few details call for remark. First, the intention contains the name of the plaintiff only, not of the defendant. This is a common characteristic of actions in rem. Next, the condemnation is conditional upon the failure to restore. If the property is restored, condemnation does not follow. Lastly, the condemnation, which for the first time introduces the name of the defendant, leaves the amount of the condemnation to the discretion of the judge. It was the practice for the plaintiff to swear to the value of the property, or to his interest in having it restored (*jusjurandum in litem*). He would naturally estimate his interest at a high figure, and was encouraged to do so.<sup>42</sup> This was an indirect method of procuring specific performance. But it was always open to the defendant to pay the assessed damages and keep the thing, so that *litis aestimatio* was in effect a mode of acquiring ownership (§ 169).<sup>43</sup> The words importing “restoration at your discretion” are known as the *clausula arbitraria*, which is a common feature of real actions.

709. The formula of which we have given a specimen is termed the formula petitoria. In the time of Gaius the plaintiff in a real action had the alternative of suing by a procedural wager initiated by a *sponsio* in the terms, “if [the thing] in question is mine by Quiritary title do you promise to give twenty-five sesterces?” This was a mere form designed to raise the question of title. The plaintiff was said *per sponsonem agere*.

G. 4. 91.

<sup>41</sup> G. 4. 41, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Dig. 12. 3. 11.

<sup>43</sup> Dig. 6. 1. 46.



710. II. CIVIL LAW ACTIONS IN PERSONAM.—These are *stricti juris* or *bonae fidei*. The principal cases of the first class are the *condictio certae pecuniae*, the *condictio triticaria* and the *actio ex stipulatu*. Examples follow.

711. (a) *Condictio certae pecuniae*.

"Titius iudex esto: si paret Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio sestertium decem milia dare oportere, iudex, Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio sestertium decem milia condemna, si non paret, absolve."<sup>44</sup>

"Be Titius judge: if it appears that Numerius Negidius ought to give to Aulus Agerius ten thousand sesterces, do you, judge, condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius in ten thousand sesterces, if it does not appear, absolve."

This is a simple formula consisting after the nomination of the judge of two parts only, intention and condemnation. Since the action is in *personam*, the name of the defendant appears in the intention. The words *dare oportere* indicate the civil law character of the action. The condemnation is *certa*. No mention is made in the intentio of the cause of the action. Whether this is *mutuum*, stipulation, or anything else has no effect on the structure of the formula.

712. (b) *Condictio triticaria*, *i.e.*, claim for any *res certa* other than money.<sup>45</sup>

"Titius iudex esto: si paret Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio tritici Africi optimi modios centum dare oportere, iudex, quanti ea res est, tantam pecuniam Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio condemna, si non paret, absolve."

"Be Titius judge: if it appears that Numerius Negidius ought to give to Aulus Agerius one hundred bushels of best African wheat, whatever is the amount involved, in so much money condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius, if it does not appear, absolve."

The condemnation is *incerta*. It is for the judge to ascertain the amount. Here again the *causa* is not stated.

713. (c) *Actio ex stipulatu*.<sup>46</sup>

"Titius iudex esto: quod Aulus Agerius de Numerio Negidio incertum stipulatus est, quidquid paret ob eam rem Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio dare facere oportere, ejus, iudex,

<sup>44</sup> G. 4. 41, 43.

<sup>45</sup> Dig. 13. 3. 1.

<sup>46</sup> The term was limited to stipulations for an *incertum*, *i.e.*, for something which was neither *certa pecunia* nor *certa res*. Dig. 12. 1. 24; 13. 3. 1. (§ 437). But the *actio ex stipulatu* was not the same as the *condictio incerti*, which developed later and lay in cases to which the *actio ex stipulatu* was inapplicable. Buckl. *T.* p. 683; *M.* p. 267.

Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio condemna, si non paret, absolve." <sup>47</sup>

"Be Titius judge: Inasmuch as Aulus Agerius has stipulated from Numerius Negidius for a performance undefined in amount, whatever it appears that on that account Numerius Negidius ought to give to or do for Aulus Agerius, thereunto, judge, condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius, if it does not appear, absolve."

Here for the first time we meet with the demonstratio. As in the last example the condemnatio is incerta.

714. (d) *Bonae fidei actio in personam*. The *actio venditi* or *ex vendito* may be taken as typical of this group.

"Titius iudex esto: quod Aulus Agerius Numerio Negidio hominem vendidit, quo de agitur, quicquid paret ob eam rem Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio dare facere oportere ex fide bona, ejus, iudex, Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio condemna, si non paret, absolve."

"Be Titius judge: Inasmuch as Aulus Agerius has sold to Numerius Negidius a slave in respect of whom this action is brought, whatever it appears that Numerius Negidius in good faith ought to give to or do for Aulus Agerius, thereunto, judge, condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius, if it does not appear, absolve."

Here again there is a demonstratio, as is usual in *bonae fidei* actions, and the *bonae fidei* character of the action is marked by the insertion in the intentio of the words *ex fide bona*.

715. III. *PRAETORIAN ACTIONS IN FACTUM*.—Gaius gives two illustrations, and in each case reproduces the whole formula from beginning to end. The first, which cannot have been of frequent occurrence, is the formula of the action given by the praetor to the patron against whom his freedman has brought an action without previous permission obtained from the praetor.

"Lucius et Titius et Sempronius recuperatores sunt: Si paret illum patronum ab illo liberto contra edictum [illius] praetoris in jus vocatum esse, recuperatores, illum libertum illi patrono sestertium decem milia condemnate, si non paret, absolvite." <sup>48</sup>

"Be Lucius and Titius and Sempronius recuperatores<sup>49</sup>: if it appears that such a patron was summoned to court by such a freedman, contrary to the praetor's edict, do you, recuperatores, condemn the freedman to the patron in the sum of ten thousand sesterces, if it does not appear, absolve."

<sup>47</sup> G. 4. 136.

<sup>48</sup> G. 4. 46.

<sup>49</sup> *Supra*, § 694.

716. Another example of the praetorian *actio in factum* is the *actio depositi*. The formula runs:—

“Titius iudex esto: si paret Aulum Agerium apud Numerium Negidium mensam argenteam deposuisse eamque dolo malo Numerii Negidii Aulo Agerio redditam non esse, quanti ea res erit, tantam pecuniam, iudex, Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio condemnato, si non paret, absolvito.”<sup>50</sup>

“Be Titius judge: If it appears that Aulus Agerius deposited a silver table with Numerius Negidius and the same through the misconduct of Numerius Negidius has not been returned to Aulus Agerius, whatsoever shall be the value thereof, in so much money condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius, if it does not appear, absolve.”

717. In the case of deposit (as also in the case of *commodatum*) there was an alternative formula with an *intentio in jus concepta*, which ran as follows:—

“Titius iudex esto: quod Aulus Agerius apud Numerium Negidium mensam argenteam deposuit, qua de re agitur, quidquid ob eam rem Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio dare facere oportet ex fide bona, ejus, iudex, Numerium Negidium Aulo Agerio condemnato, si non paret, absolvito.”<sup>51</sup>

“Be Titius judge. Inasmuch as Aulus Agerius has deposited with Numerius Negidius the silver table which is in question, whatsoever in respect thereof Numerius Negidius ought to give to or do for Aulus Agerius in good faith, therein, judge, condemn Numerius Negidius to Aulus Agerius, if it does not appear, absolve.”

718. Of these two formulae the first was the older. In process of time, doubtless under the influence of the jurists, deposit, from being merely matter of fact, which the praetor recognised as grounding an action, came to constitute a legal relation between the parties giving rise to a civil law action. There were other relations which went through the same course of development, but in deposit as in *commodatum* (which was not always the case) the older and the later formulae continued to exist side by side.

719. The difference between the two types of action appears in the structure of the formula. The first consists of two parts only, the intention, embodying the fact, and the condemnation, which follows if the fact is established. Since this action is not one of the small group of actions in *factum* which contained a direction to the iudex to condemn to what shall seem

<sup>50</sup> G. 4. 47.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

right and just, equitable defences, if any, must be raised by way of exception.<sup>52</sup>

The second type of the *actio depositi* is in *jus concepta*. There is a demonstration. The intention contains the words *ex fide bona* characteristic of a *bonae fidei judicium*. There is no need to plead equitable exceptions, for they are implied in the instruction to the *judex*.

720. Reference has been made to two other clauses employed in special circumstances, the *praescriptio* and the *exceptio*.

721. The *praescriptio* was so-called, Gaius tells us, because it was inserted before the formula,<sup>53</sup> and therefore, properly speaking, was not part of it. The purpose of the *praescriptio* was to limit the scope of the action, so that future claims arising out of the same transaction might not be consumed by *litis contestatio*. For example:—

“It often happens that out of one and the same obligation there arise both an immediate and a future claim, as when we have stipulated for a certain sum yearly or monthly; at the end of the first year or month the payment in respect of it then becomes due, but there is not yet any claim for the payments applicable to future years [or months], although an obligation for them is held to have been contracted. If therefore we desire to sue for what is now payable, and to submit our claim in respect of it to judicial decision, and at the same time to reserve entire our future claims under the same obligation, we must have a prescription in these terms. “Be the action limited to claims which have accrued due (*ea res agatur cujus rei dies fuit*).”<sup>54</sup>

Gaius gives this as an illustration of a *praescriptio* introduced for the benefit of the plaintiff (*pro actore*). There were also cases of *praescriptio* inserted for the benefit of the defendant (*pro reo*), in opposition to the plaintiff's claim.<sup>55</sup> But these were superseded by the system of exceptions and need not occupy our attention.

722. The *exceptio* was an equitable defence to the plaintiff's claim. It did not deny the plaintiff's right, but denied his right to enforce it. It was inserted in the intention as a negative condition of the condemnation:—

“All exceptions are a contradiction of the plaintiff's affirmation. For example, if the defendant alleges that the plaintiff

<sup>52</sup> Buckl. M. p. 368. In this respect actions in factum resembled *actiones stricti juris* (§ 684).

<sup>53</sup> G. 4. 132.

<sup>54</sup> G. 4. 131. (mainly Muirhead's translation).

<sup>55</sup> G. 4. 133.

is doing something fraudulent, as, for instance, if he is suing for money alleged to have been paid, which he did not in fact pay, the exception runs: 'if in this matter Aulus Agerius has not acted or is not acting fraudulently'<sup>56</sup>; or, suppose the defendant says that the plaintiff is bringing the action in breach of an agreement not to sue, the exception runs: 'if Aulus Agerius and Numerius Negidius did not agree that the money should not be claimed'<sup>57</sup>; and so in other cases. The exceptio always proceeds from the defendant and is inserted in the formula so as to make the condemnation conditional, that is to say, the *judex* is not to condemn the defendant unless there has been no fraud on the part of the plaintiff, or unless there has not been an agreement not to sue."

723. Of all exceptions the *exceptio doli* was the most important. Like the *exceptio metus* it came into use in the last century of the republic.<sup>58</sup> In its developed form it was available as a defence not merely when a transaction was initially tainted with fraud, but also when the plaintiff acted dishonestly in bringing the action. Thus, it was available to a *bona fide* possessor who had built on another man's land against an owner seeking to vindicate his land, who refused to compensate him for the price of the materials and the wages of the workmen, and it came to be admitted in substitution for any other exception founded on matter of fact known to the plaintiff:—

"And in general it must be remarked that all matters of exception founded on the facts give rise to the *exceptio doli* because a plaintiff acts fraudulently if he advances a claim which can be defeated by any kind of exception; for even if the plaintiff did not act fraudulently to begin with, he does so now in bringing the action, unless his ignorance of the circumstances excludes the imputation of fraud."<sup>59</sup>

724. This passage indicates the very elastic nature of this paramount exception. The commentators distinguish an exception based upon an initial fraud as *exceptio doli specialis* (or *praeteriti*), and an exception based upon the fraudulent conduct of the plaintiff in bringing the action as *exceptio doli generalis* (or *praesentis*).<sup>60</sup> It must be noticed that by pleading an exception the defendant did not admit the plaintiff's

<sup>56</sup> *Exceptio doli*: "Si in ea re nihil dolo malo Auli Agerii factum sit neque fiat."

<sup>57</sup> *Exceptio pacti de non petendo*: "Si inter Aulum Agerium et Numerium Negidium non convenit ne ea pecunia peteretur."

<sup>58</sup> The *actio doli* was introduced by Aquilius Gallus, praetor together with Cicero in the year 66 B.C. The *exceptio*, according to Girard (p. 450, n. 2), was introduced soon afterwards.

<sup>59</sup> Dig. 44. 4. 2, 5

<sup>60</sup> Sohm, ed. Ledlie (3), pp. 279, 280.

legal right. The exception was a second line of defence, not a confession and avoidance. The defendant might put the plaintiff to the proof of his allegation. He might say, for instance: "I did not enter into the alleged stipulation"—this might be a question of the construction of a *cautio*—"and if I did, you procured my promise by fraud". The burden of proving the exception naturally fell upon the defendant.

"The word *agere* applies also to a defendant who pleads an exception: for as regards an exception the defendant is in the position of a plaintiff."<sup>61</sup>

725. The *exceptio* might in turn be challenged by a counterplea called *replicatio* and this again by a *duplicatio* and this again by a *triplicatio*, and so forth.<sup>62</sup> Not to carry the pleading to any such unusual degree of complication, it may suffice to indicate a possible case of *replicatio*—*viz.*, *plaintiff's case*—promise by *stipulatio*; *exceptio*—pact not to sue; *replicatio*—substituted pact allowing the plaintiff to sue. It will be remembered that in *bonae fidei judicia* the usual equitable defences and, of course, further pleas of the same character, were implied, so that they need not be expressly pleaded in the formula.

726. The principal exceptions may be properly described as equitable defences. There were other exceptions based upon a *lex* or a *senatusconsultum*.<sup>63</sup> At first sight it might be thought that if the defendant set up a statutory prohibition this was a flat denial of the plaintiff's case, which should result *ipso jure* in absolution. But it must be remembered that a statute might prohibit a transaction without penalising or annulling it (*lex imperfecta*), or might prohibit and penalise without annulling (*lex minus quam perfecta*). This explains why defences based upon the *lex Plaetoria* (§ 126) and the *lex Cincia* (§ 200) were raised by way of exception.<sup>63a</sup> It must be remembered, too, that the many important *senatusconsulta* of the early empire were not technically legislative acts, but instructions to the magistrates. They did not abrogate the right of action at civil law, so in this case also the defence was raised by way of exception. Such were the *exceptio senatusconsulti Macedoniani*, *senatusconsulti Vellaeani*, *senatusconsulti Trebelliani*.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Dig. 44. 1. 1.

<sup>62</sup> G. 4. 126; Inst. 4. 14.

<sup>63</sup> G. 4. 118; Inst. 4. 14. 7.

<sup>63a</sup> Ulp. I. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Dig. 36. 1. 28(27), 7.

727. What has been said explains the statement of Gaius, repeated by Justinian, that exceptions owe their existence to statutes or to equivalent enactments, or to the jurisdiction of the praetor.<sup>65</sup> It would be more correct to say that all exceptions proceeded from the praetor, though some were given under directions derived from an outside source.<sup>66</sup> In the cases in which the praetor was free to act on his own initiative he pursued the same course as in regard to actions. The circumstances in which an exception would be granted might be stated in the Edict; or the exception might be allowed in view of the particular circumstances of the case, and either after preliminary inquiry (*causa cognita*) or of course upon the defendant's presentation of the facts. An instance of an *exceptio* granted upon a special state of facts was the *exceptio* given to the defendant in an action brought by his patron or parent. It would be too disrespectful to set up an *exceptio doli*, and this was not allowed; but the same issues of fact might be raised in a special plea. An instance of an *exceptio* given after inquiry is the *exceptio iusti domini*,<sup>67</sup> given to the owner against a possessor in course of usucapion, who brought an *actio Publiciana in rem*. Since the formula directed the *iudex* to proceed as if the usucapion were already complete, the owner who said that it was incomplete could only raise the issue by way of exception. This was a very anomalous case in which a defendant with a civil law title could not meet the plaintiff's action with a flat denial of his right.

728. Exceptions are variously classified as :—

1. peremptory (or perpetual)—dilatory (or temporary).
2. in rem—in personam—*rei cohaerentes*—*personae cohaerentes*.

729. Peremptory exceptions<sup>68</sup> were exceptions which might be pleaded without limit of time; *e.g.*, a pact not to sue at all; dilatory exceptions were exceptions which were available only within a limited time, *e.g.*, a pact not to sue for five years. A dilatory exception might also be founded on an objection not to the time of suing, but to the person of the plaintiff; if, for example, a person was suing by a cognitor, when the Edict forbade him to do so, or had accredited as his cognitor, or, in Justinian's day, procurator, a person who could

<sup>65</sup> G. 4. 118; Inst. 4. 7. 7.

<sup>66</sup> Girard, p. 1096.

<sup>67</sup> Dig. 17. 1. 57.

<sup>68</sup> G. 4. 120; Inst. 4. 13. 8.

not act in that capacity (for example, a soldier or a woman).<sup>69</sup> Before Justinian as regards their effect there was no difference between peremptory and dilatory exceptions. If the plaintiff allowed the matter to go to *litis contestatio*, either of them was fatal to his claim, not only in the present proceedings, but for all time; for any renewal of his claim might be met by the *exceptio rei in iudicium deductae* (the exception that the matter had been brought to trial).<sup>70</sup>

780. Exceptions were further distinguished according to their scope. Some, as we might say, went to the root of the matter (in *rem scriptae*—*rei cohaerentes*) and were general in their application; others were available against, or to, specific persons alone (in *personam*—*personae cohaerentes*).<sup>71</sup> The *exceptio metus* might be objected to any person seeking to profit by the transaction in question, even an innocent third party; not so the *exceptio doli*, which, in general, could be objected only to the author of the fraud. The *exceptio cognitoria* or *procuratoria* mentioned in the last section had the same personal character. These were cases of exceptions personal in relation to the plaintiff. Others were personal in relation to the defendant. Of two partners one might be entitled to plead the so-called *beneficium competentiae* (the *exceptio quod facere possit*),<sup>72</sup> another not. A pactum not to sue (*pactum de non petendo*) might be construed as a pactum in *personam* limited to the promisee, or, more often, as a pactum in *rem*, available also to his sureties.<sup>73</sup> The exception "unless he has made cession of his goods" was naturally not available to sureties.

4. 14. 4.

781. This concludes what we have to say with regard to the mode of trial in the formulary procedure. We pass to the third stage in the proceedings, namely, execution of the judgment.

732. (C) EXECUTION—This might be directed either against the person, or against the property, of the debtor.

783. (i) EXECUTION AGAINST THE PERSON.—The mitigated system of *manus injectio* (§ 670) remained in force. But the *legis actio* was replaced by an action on the judgment (*actio iudicati*). This reproduced in its initial stages the incidents of an ordinary action: summons, appearance, statement of

<sup>69</sup> G. 4. 124; Inst. 4. 13. 11. For the difference between *cognitor* and *procurator*, see G. 4. 83, 84.

<sup>70</sup> G. 4. 123; Inst. 4. 13. 10.

<sup>71</sup> Dig. 44. 4. 4, 33; 44. 1. 7.

<sup>72</sup> Dig. 44. 1. 7 pr.

<sup>73</sup> Dig. 2. 14. 7, 8; 21. 5; 22; 32; 44. 1. 19.



plaintiff's case. As a rule there was no defence. But it might happen that the defendant challenged the formal validity of the judgment or said that it had been satisfied. He was entitled to raise these questions by way of defence in the action on the judgment. But he had to find a surety for the satisfaction of the judgment (*cautio judicatum solvi*), and if he was defeated in this second action he and by consequence his surety were liable for twice the amount of the judgment. This was a reminiscence of the *legis actio*. Sometimes he could defend the action without incurring this risk, as for instance when he pleaded a *beneficium competentiae* (§ 212) or a set-off in reduction of his liability.<sup>74</sup> If the debtor did not defend the action, because he had no defence to offer, or no confidence in the result, or could not find a surety, the proceedings came to an abrupt end with a magisterial decree authorising the plaintiff to take him away (*duci jubet*). This meant that he might be kept in confinement and bonds until he had satisfied the debt or liquidated it by his labour.

G. 4. 102. 734. (ii) EXECUTION AGAINST PROPERTY.—This is said to have been introduced by Publius Rutilius, who was praetor not later than 118 B.C. It is thought to have followed the procedure adopted by the quaestors against persons indebted to the State (*sectio bonorum*).<sup>75</sup> It was in general an alternative (perhaps a cumulative) remedy. But in some cases it was the only available method. Such were:—1, if the debtor evaded arrest, being within the jurisdiction; 2, if he was absent from the jurisdiction and had not appointed a representative to defend him; 3, if he had made *cessio bonorum* under the *lex Julia judiciaria*; 4, if the debtor had died insolvent and no one took up the estate as heir or *bonorum* possessor. The procedure, prescribed in the Edict, in which the praetor said “I will order the goods to be possessed, advertised and sold” (*bona possideri proscribi vendique jubebo*), was as follows.<sup>76</sup>

735. *Missio in possessionem rei servandae causa*.—A certain interval having elapsed after judgment, perhaps thirty days as under the *legis actio* procedure, a judgment creditor might apply to the praetor to be put in possession of the debtor's estate for the purpose of watching it. This would normally be granted as of course. Its effect was not to give the petitioning creditor juristic possession (§ 253), but

<sup>74</sup> Wenger, p. 220.

<sup>75</sup> Girard, p. 1110.

<sup>76</sup> Girard, p. 1112.

merely to put him in possession "to preserve the property", and in particular with the object of preventing alienation in fraud of creditors. The order was made for the protection of the general body of creditors. The *missus in possessionem* had a limited power of management. He was protected by interdict against interference in the exercise of his functions. It was his duty to make an inventory and advertise the fact of seizure (*proscribere*). If the circumstances called for it, the praetor, at the instance of the creditors, would appoint one of their number, or a stranger, to act as manager (*curator bonorum*). This would imply a postponement, perhaps for an indefinite time, of the next step in the procedure, namely, the sale.

736. *Venditio bonorum*.—In a normal case the possession was not long continued. A short interval was allowed to elapse after the first decree in order to give the debtor an opportunity of coming to terms with his creditors. After thirty days if the debtor was alive, fifteen if he was dead, the praetor made a second order directing the creditors to come together for the purpose of appointing one of their number manager (*magister*). If a living debtor had not by now made cession of his goods he became *infamis*. The function of the *magister* was to publish a catalogue of the items comprised in the estate and the conditions of sale (*lex venditionis*). After a further interval of ten or five days, according as the debtor was alive or dead, the sale took place, not in detail but in block, to the bidder who offered to pay the highest dividend to the creditors. Finally, perhaps after a further interval, the *magister* (under praetorian authority) assigned the *universitas bonorum* to the purchaser. This gave him bonitary ownership (§ 140), which in a short time would ripen into dominium by *usucapio* (§ 160). G 3 79. Meanwhile, the purchaser, termed the *bonorum emptor*, had a possessory interdict (*interdictum possessorium*) to recover any item of the estate from third parties, and he might maintain any action which was competent to the debtor, whether in *rem* or in *personam*, in the form known as the *actio Rutiliana* if the debtor was alive, and in the form known as the *actio Serviana* if he was dead (§ 680). He could be sued in the same actions by creditors of the estate to the extent of the agreed dividend. It must be noticed that the *emptio bonorum* did not release the debtor from liability. If he acquired fresh assets they might be the subject of another sale. For this amongst other reasons, this sale in execution cannot properly be regarded as a case of G 3 80.

universal succession, though Gaius and Justinian describe it as acquisition per universitatem, and Gaius speaks of it as a succession, Justinian as a succession per universitatem.<sup>77</sup> But, as Buckland points out, what the purchaser acquired was a universitas rerum, a mass of res, not a universitas juris.<sup>78</sup>

4. 6. 40. 737. The *cessio bonorum* already mentioned, *i.e.* a voluntary surrender of the estate for the benefit of the creditors, culminated in a sale as above described, but it was more advantageous to the debtor for:—1, it exempted him from arrest and imprisonment; 2, did not render him *infamis*; 3, his after-acquired property was not liable beyond the excess over what was necessary for the subsistence of himself and his dependents (*beneficium competentiae*).

738. We set out to speak of the execution of a judgment. What we have been describing is the liquidation of an insolvent estate. In fact they are indistinguishable. Before the time of Gaius a modification of the procedure had been introduced particularly in favour of *claræ personæ* (persons of high rank),<sup>79</sup> whereby, as Girard puts it, the sale en bloc to a speculator who re-sells in detail is replaced by a sale in detail made for the benefit of the creditors themselves by a curator. This process, known as *distractio bonorum*, superseded the (so-called) universal succession of the old procedure, but it still remained necessary to seize the whole estate in order to realise a single debt or to execute a single judgment.<sup>80</sup> It was merely a modification of the old procedure in insolvency.

739. This brings us to the end of what we have to say about the normal process of litigation per formulas. It is known as the formulary procedure, or the ordinary procedure, because it derived its character from the *ordo formularum*. Procedure which deviated from it was said to be *extra ordinem*. Even during the period of the vigorous existence of the formulary system there were departures from it. We have seen that its fundamental characteristic, perpetuated from the period of the *legis actiones*, was the division of the proceedings into proceedings in *jure* and proceedings *apud iudicem*. The first took place before the magistrate, the second before a judge or arbiter agreed to by the parties. But many important matters were not sub-

<sup>77</sup> G. 2. 97; Inst. 2. 9. 6. G. 3. 77; Inst. 3. 12 pr.

<sup>78</sup> Buckl. *M.* p. 246.

<sup>79</sup> Dig. 27. 10. 5.

<sup>80</sup> Girard, p. 1114.

mitted to this process. They never left the court of the magistrate, who saw the litigation through from beginning to end. We have seen an example in the "extra-ordinary" aid given to the mandatary (nominally unpaid) to recover an agreed salarium (§ 500). Even in the early days of the Empire whole fields of law were placed in the hands of special praetors, whose procedure was *extra ordinem*. Such were the praetor tutelaris, who handled questions arising out of guardianship,<sup>81</sup> and the praetor fideicommissarius, who was charged with jurisdiction in questions relating to *fideicommissa* (§ 347). As time went on the new system more and more prevailed at the expense of the old, first in the provinces and in Italy, ultimately in the capital. The process of disintegration was probably complete by the end of the third century (reign of Diocletian). A rescript of Constantius and Constans of 342, to the effect that—

"Legal formulae which contain an insidious snare in every syllable are to be radically removed from every person's acts"<sup>82</sup>

has been regarded as marking the final elimination of the formula from legal procedure, but the old distinction between *jus* and *judicium* was already a thing of the past.

### III. THE EXTRAORDINARY PROCEDURE.

740. We have seen that in the period of the *legis actiones* legal process took the form of regulated self-help. It was left to the plaintiff to procure the attendance of the defendant before the Court, and, the parties being present, the trial postulated a reference by consent to a chosen arbitrator. Nor did the formulary procedure effect an essential change, however much the growing power and activity of the State may have asserted themselves in controlling and modifying the traditional procedure. In the third period all this is changed. The attendance of the defendant is procured by an official summons. The trial is conducted in all its stages by a salaried judge, subject in a fit case to appeal to a higher Court, or to the Emperor. The process of execution against property is simpler and more rational. In general, therefore, the procedure in this period is not far removed from that with which we are familiar in modern systems. A summary statement of its character will suffice. As before, we speak of the three stages of Summons, Trial and Execution. We describe the culmination of the system in the

<sup>81</sup> *Vat.* 232. Ulpian wrote a monograph *de officio praetoris tutelaris*.

<sup>82</sup> *Cod.* 2. 57(58). 1.

law of Justinian, without noticing the intermediate stages through which it passed in the course of its development out of the earlier system.

741. (A) SUMMONS.—At the instance of the plaintiff a competent Court issued and through its officer served upon the defendant a summons accompanied by the plaintiff's statement of claim. This was the *libellus conventionis*. The defendant was required to give security for his appearance and by a named date to lodge in Court his answer, known as the *libellus contradictionis* or *responsionis*.

742. (B) TRIAL.—This followed the normal course, with evidence and argument, culminating in the sentence of the judge, which, though usually, was no longer necessarily expressed in terms of a pecuniary condemnation. It might direct specific performance.

743. (C) EXECUTION.—If specific performance was ordered the Court would employ its officers to give effect to it, or to compel compliance with the order. In the last resort it had at its command the armed force of the State. If the condemnation was pecuniary, execution was levied upon the property of the judgment-debtor, which was sold to the amount required to satisfy the claim. This was the *pignus ex iudicati causa captum*, which had been introduced by the Emperor Antoninus Pius in connection with the procedure *extra ordinem* of his time. Execution against the person was perhaps disused.<sup>83</sup> If there were several judgment creditors, and in case of insolvency, the debtor's assets were liquidated by *distractio bonorum*.

## THE INSTITUTES

(BOOK IV, TIT. VI, XII—XIV)

### TITLE VI

#### *Of actions*

It remains to speak of actions. An action is nothing else than the right of prosecuting a claim in a court of law.<sup>84</sup>

§ 677. 1. All actions in which a question is raised before judges or arbitrators fall into one or other of two principal classes; they are either actions in *rem*, or actions in *personam*. For a man either brings an action against some one who is liable to him under an obligation from contract or delict, in which case actions are given in

<sup>83</sup> "Personal seizure seems to have survived into this period but died out." Buckl. *M.* p. 392.

<sup>84</sup> Dig. 44. 7. 51 (Celsus).

personam, whereby the plaintiff alleges that the defendant ought to give him something or do something for him, or makes some other claim; or he brings his action against a person who is not bound to him by any obligation, but raises a question of right with regard to a thing, in which case actions are given in rem. For instance, suppose someone possesses a corporeal thing, which Titius alleges to belong to him, while the possessor on the other hand says that he is owner; if Titius brings an action claiming the thing as his, the action is in rem. 2. So, again, if a man brings an action alleging that he has a right of use and enjoyment (usufruct) of something—of land or a house, for instance—or asserting a servitude of iter, actus, or aquaeductus, the action is in rem; so, too, if the action is brought to establish an urban servitude, such as a servitude of building higher or a right of prospect and the like. There are also contrary actions given in respect of usufruct or of rustic or urban servitudes in which a plaintiff alleges that the defendant has not a right of usufruct, or of rustic or urban servitude. In these cases the actions are in rem, but negative. This kind of action is inapplicable when a corporeal thing is in question, for in such cases the action is brought by the person who is out of possession, and there is no corresponding action in which the person in possession alleges that the thing does not belong to the opposite party. There is, indeed, one case in which the possessor assumes the role of plaintiff as may be seen in the ampler text of the Digest.<sup>85</sup>

3. The above-mentioned actions and others like them are based on statute and the civil law. There are other actions both in rem and in personam which the praetor has introduced by virtue of his jurisdiction, of which we will give some examples. Thus the praetor often gives an action in rem, in which a plaintiff is allowed to say that he is in the same position as if he had usucaped a thing when in fact he has not done so, or, conversely, that a defendant has not usucaped when in fact he has. 4. Thus, if a person has received a thing by tradition for any just cause, such as, gift, dower or legacy, and before he has become owner by usucapion has through some accident lost possession of the thing in question, he has no direct action in rem for its recovery, for no one but the owner can vindicate property in a civil law action. But since it would be harsh to deny him an action, the praetor gives an action in which the person who has lost possession alleges that he has usucaped and so reclaims the thing as his. This action is called the *actio Publiciana* because it was a praetor Publicius who first propounded it in his edict. 5. Conversely, if a person who was absent on public affairs or in the power of the enemy<sup>86</sup> has usucaped a thing belonging to a person who

<sup>85</sup> What this case is, nevertheless, remains obscure. It may simply be the case mentioned in the text (*Read sanc hoc uno casu?*). It may be the *exceptio iusti domini* in the *actio Publiciana* in rem. Dig. 6. 2. 16. (§ 727).

<sup>86</sup> This would be an exceptional case. It could only arise if a *filius* or *servus* acquired a *res ex causa pecuni*. Dig. 4. 6. 23, 3; 41. 3. 43. 7. This section is not up to date, for by a constitution of 531 (Cod. 7. 40. 2) the usucapion could be interrupted by notice to the appropriate authority. Girard, p. 1128, n. 6.

remained in the city, the latter, when the possessor comes back, may, within a year, bring an action to recover the thing by a rescission of the usucapion, that is to say by alleging that the possessor has not usucaped and that the thing belongs to him (the plaintiff). There are other cases in which the praetor is moved by similar considerations of equity to allow actions of this character, as will be found explained at large in the Digest.

6. Once more, if a person has alienated his property in fraud of creditors who have been put in possession by order of the governor, they are allowed to bring an action cancelling the alienation, that is alleging that the property has not been alienated and therefore remains an item in the debtor's estate.

§ 630.

7. Again, the *actio Serviana* and the *actio quasi-Serviana*, also called *actio hypothecaria*, owe their existence to the praetor's jurisdiction. The *actio Serviana* is brought by a land-owner to get possession of the movables of an agricultural tenant which are pledged to him to secure the rent. The *actio quasi-Serviana* is the action by which creditors in general realise a pledge or hypothec. So far as this action is concerned there is no difference between pledge and hypothec, for whenever a creditor and debtor have agreed that a thing is to be bound to secure a debt the transaction may be indifferently described by either term. But in other respects there is a difference; for the word *pignus* is correctly employed when a thing (particularly a movable thing) is handed over to a creditor; but if a thing is bound by simple agreement without delivery, it is properly described as a hypothec. 8. There are also actions in *personam* which the praetor has propounded by virtue of his jurisdiction, for example the *actio de pecunia constituta*, and another action very like it called the *actio recepticia*; but our constitution,<sup>87</sup> which attached to the first of these actions any advantage which belonged to the second, has rendered the *actio recepticia* unnecessary and we have deprived it of authority and declared it to be no longer in force. Other praetorian actions in *personam* are the actions which the praetor allows to be brought in respect of the *peculium* of a slave or a son in power and the action to determine whether the plaintiff has taken a procedural oath, and there are many others. 9. The *actio de pecunia constituta* lies against any one who has promised to pay a debt owed by himself or a third party, that is to say where there is no stipulation. For one who has promised in answer to a stipulation is bound at civil law. 10. The praetor has given the *actio de peculio* against fathers and masters, because though they are not bound at civil law by the contracts of their sons and slaves it seemed fair that they should be held liable to the extent of the *peculium* of which sons and daughters and slaves may in a way be said to be owners. 11. Again, if a plaintiff, being challenged thereto by the defendant, has sworn that the sum which he was claiming was due, and it is not paid, the praetor most justly allows him an action in which the question is not whether the money is owed him, but whether the plaintiff has sworn. 12. There are also a great number of

§ 549.

§ 513.

<sup>87</sup> Cod. 4. 18. 2.

penal actions which the praetor has introduced by virtue of his jurisdiction; for instance against any one who has tampered with his album (§ 12), or summoned to Court a patron or parent, without previous permission from the magistrate, or violently released a person who was being summoned, or wrongfully connived at such a release, and there are many other cases too numerous to mention. § 715.

13. Prejudicial actions seem to be in rem. Such are actions brought to determine questions of status, for example whether a person is a free man, or whether he is a freedman, or to decide a question of legitimacy. Of these perhaps one only is derived from the civil law, namely, the action brought to inquire whether a person is a free man. All the rest are praetorian. § 705

14. Actions being thus discriminated, it is apparent that a plaintiff cannot claim a thing which belongs to him by using the words, "if it appears that the defendant ought to give", because, of course, a thing is understood to be given in order to make it some one's property, and a thing which already belongs to a plaintiff cannot be made his any more than it is already. To be sure, to mark the odious character of theft and to accumulate actions against thieves, it has come about that in addition to the penal action for double or quadruple value, there is also an action for the recovery of the property expressed in the words "if it appears that they ought to give", though thieves may also (in the alternative) be sued in the actio in rem in which the owner seeks to recover his property. § 702.

§ 593.

15. Actions in rem are termed vindications, actions in personam in which a plaintiff claims that the defendant should give or do are called condictiones. The word *condicere* in the old language means to give notice, but today the word is applied to an action in personam in which the plaintiff claims that something should be given to him, but incorrectly, for no formal notice is given as in the old procedure. § 661

16. The next division of actions is that some lie for reparation, some for a penalty, some are mixed. 17. All actions in rem are for reparation. Of actions in personam, almost all actions based on contract are for reparation, such as an action for money lent or due under a stipulation, actions on loan for use, deposit, mandate, partnership, purchase and sale, giving and taking on hire. No doubt if an action is brought on a deposit made on the occasion of civil disorder, fire, earthquake or shipwreck, the praetor gives an action for double the loss against the deposittee, and against his heir as well if the heir has acted dishonestly. In this case the action is mixed. § 685

§ 422

18. Of actions on delict, some are given to recover a penalty, others lie to recover a penalty and for reparation as well, and are therefore mixed. The *actio furti*, whether for quadruple damages when the theft is manifest, or for double damages when the theft is non-manifest, is merely penal; for the owner has in addition an action for the recovery of the thing based upon the assertion of ownership, which lies against the person in possession, whether the



thief or any one else, and there is also a *condictio* for the thing against the thief.

4. 2 pr.

§ 615.

4. 3. 9.

19. The action for goods taken by violence (*actio vi bonorum raptorum*) is mixed, because the quadruple damages recoverable in this action include the value of the thing, and the penalty is for thrice the value. So too the action which lies for damage to property under the *lex Aquilia* is mixed, not only when the claim is for double damages against a defendant who denies his liability, but also in some cases when the action is brought for single damages; as, for instance, if a man has killed a slave who when he was killed was lame or had lost an eye, but within the year was sound and of great value; for the defendant is condemned (as explained above in speaking of this subject) to pay the highest value in the past year. Again, it is a mixed action which is brought against persons who have been so dilatory in paying a legacy or *fideicommissum* left to a holy church or to any other sacred place that it has been necessary to take legal proceedings. In such a case they are compelled to give the thing or to pay the money left by the deceased, and as much again by way of penalty, so that the whole condemnation is for double value.

§ 690.

§ 703.

20. Some actions may be said to be mixed in the sense that they are at the same time actions in rem and actions in personam. To this class belong the *actio familiae erciscundae*, which lies between co-heirs for the division of the inheritance; the *actio communi dividundo*, given for the division of property owned in undivided shares; the *actio finium regundorum*, which is brought between neighbours for the ascertainment of boundaries. In these three actions the judge is empowered to adjudicate property to one of the litigants as may be right and just, and if the share assigned to one outweighs the share assigned to another, he is to condemn the person who gets the better share to pay a certain sum of money to the other.

21. All actions lie either for single, double, treble or quadruple damages; beyond this the assessment is never carried.

22. Single damages are claimed in actions brought upon a stipulation, a *mutuum*, on purchase, sale, letting on hire, taking on hire, mandate, and in a great many other cases.

23. We sue for double damages in the action for non-manifest theft and sometimes in actions for *damnum injuria* under the *lex Aquilia* and for deposit and in some other cases, also for corrupting a slave and in the case just mentioned of a legacy to sacred places. The action for corrupting a slave lies against one at whose instigation or advice another man's slave has run away, or become disobedient or dissolute, or, in short, has in any way been made worse. The estimate of damages includes the value of any things which the slave carried off when he ran away. 24. An action lies for triple damages when some one has overstated the value in his writ of summons, with the consequence that the process-server has demanded too large a fee. The person who has sustained this loss will recover from the plaintiff thrice the amount of the expense

incurred. A provision to this effect is inserted in our Code,<sup>88</sup> which makes it clear that a *condictio* can be brought under the statute.

25. The claim is for quadruple damages in the case of manifest theft, in the action *metus causa* and when money has been given as an inducement to a person to take vexatious proceedings against another or to refrain from doing so. Likewise our constitution allows a statutory *condictio* for quadruple damages against process-servers who exact from defendants sums in excess of the permitted tariff.

26. The actions for non-manifest theft and for corrupting a slave differ from the others in being always for double damages; but the others, that is the action on the *lex Aquilia*, and in certain cases the action on deposit, are doubled in case of denial, but lie in *simpulum* against the defendant who admits liability; claims arising out of legacies to sacred places are doubled not only by denial, but also if settlement is delayed until process issues by order of the magistrate, but if the claim is admitted and if payment is made before summons, then nothing is due beyond the simple value.

27. The *actio metus causa* differs from the others above mentioned, because it contains the tacit condition that the defendant is absolved if he obeys the judge's order to restore the thing in question to the plaintiff. In the other actions this is not so, but the defendant is in any event condemned to pay the quadruple value, as for example in the action for manifest theft.

28. Some actions are *bonae fidei*, others *stricti juris*. The *bonae fidei* actions are the actions on purchase, sale, letting on hire, taking on hire, *negotiorum gestio*, mandate, deposit, partnership, tutelage, loan for use, pledge, *familiae erciscundae*, *communi dividundo*, the *actio praescriptis verbis*, which is given on the transaction called *aestimatum*, and the action on an exchange. The *hereditatis petitio* is also *bonae fidei*. This was formerly uncertain but our constitution has declared it to be so.

29. Formerly there was an action for dower (*actio rei uxoriae*) which was *bonae fidei*. But, finding that it was more advantageous to sue on a stipulation, we have abolished the former action and merged it (but with many distinctions), in the action on stipulation, which is given for the recovery of a *dos*. Having thus effected a desirable reform we thought proper that the action on stipulation should assume the *bonae fidei* character of the action which it replaced, but only when brought to recover a *dos*. In addition to this we have given the person entitled a tacit hypothec, and if the wife is the plaintiff, but in no other case, since this provision is intended for her exclusive benefit, a preference over other creditors.

30. In *bonae fidei* actions the judge is understood to have full power to assess on equitable grounds the amount to which the plaintiff is entitled, and, consequently, when the defendant has a counter-claim against the plaintiff, this should be set off against the claim and the defendant condemned to pay the balance. The Emperor Marcus by rescript allowed the defence of compensation to be raised also in *stricti juris*

<sup>88</sup> Cod. 3. 10. 2.

actions by pleading the *exceptio doli*. But our constitution<sup>89</sup> has given a wider application to counter-claims of an evident character by providing that they shall reduce the plaintiff's claim *ipso jure*, whether the action is in rem or in personam or of any other kind, with the one exception of the action on deposit, for in this case we thought it quite wrong to allow a counter-claim to be opposed to the plaintiff's demand and so make it possible for a defendant by pretending a right of set-off fraudulently to prevent a plaintiff from recovering property which he had deposited.<sup>90</sup>

§ 707 31. Some actions are called arbitrary, because they depend upon the arbitrium of the judge. These are actions in which the defendant is to be condemned unless as directed by the judge he satisfies the plaintiff's claim, as by restoring or exhibiting the thing in question or by payment or by surrender of a slave when the action is noxal. § 621. Actions of this kind may be either in rem or in personam. Examples of the first are the *actio Publiciana*, the *actio Serviana* brought in § 680. regard to the (movable) property of an agricultural tenant, the *actio quasi-Serviana*, also called the *actio hypothecaria*. Examples of personal actions with an arbitrium are the *actio metus*, the *actio doli*, and the action brought upon a promise which names the place of performance (*infra*, sec. 33c). The *actio ad exhibendum* also depends upon the arbitrium of the judge. In these and other like actions the judge is directed to decide on equitable principles according to the nature of the case the way in which the defendant is to satisfy the plaintiff's claim. § 247

32. The judge must take care, so far as possible, to give judgment for a determined sum of money or an ascertained thing, even if the claim was for an uncertain amount.

G. 4 53 33. Formerly, if a plaintiff claimed more in his intention than he was entitled to, he failed in his action, that is to say, he lost what was due to him, and it was not easy for him to get *restitutio in integrum* from the praetor, unless he were under twenty-five years of age. For, if he were, the praetor, as in other cases, would relieve him from the consequences of youthful error. No doubt, if the circumstances were such that even a thoroughly well-balanced person might reasonably have made a mistake, relief was given even to persons of maturer years; for example, when a man had claimed the whole of a legacy, and afterwards codicils were produced which took away part of the legacy, or gave other legacies, which had the effect that the plaintiff was found to have claimed more than the three quarters to which legacies are reduced by the *lex Falcidia*.

G. 4. 53a 33a. A claim may be excessive in one of four ways, that is, either in substance, time, place or cause. There is over-claim in substance, when for example a person to whom ten aurei are due claims twenty, or to whom part of a thing is due claims the whole or too large a part.

33b. There is over-claim in time if a person claims before the day, or before a condition is satisfied. For, just as a person who pays

<sup>89</sup> Cod. 4. 31. 14.

<sup>90</sup> Cod. 4. 34. 11.

later than he should, is said to pay too little, so a person who demands before he should is said to demand too much.

33c. There is over-claim in place if a person who has stipulated for performance in a certain place, brings his action elsewhere without mentioning the place of performance; for example if a person has stipulated—"Do you promise to give at Ephesus?"—and then brings his action at Rome without any qualifying words. This is understood to be an over-claim because by making an unqualified demand he deprives the defendant of the advantage which he might have in paying at Ephesus. Consequently in such cases the plaintiff is given an arbitrary action in which the judge is to take account of the advantage which the defendant would have had in paying at the place named in the contract.<sup>90a</sup> This advantage is most apparent in matters of commerce, as, for example, in contracts relating to wine, oil or grain, which have different prices in different places, and the rate of interest on money loans is not everywhere the same. But if, in the case put, the plaintiff brings his action at Ephesus, that is in the place of payment named in the stipulation, he may make his claim in unqualified terms, as the praetor points out, because the promisor retains the advantage of paying in the place agreed.

33d. Very similar to overstatement in place is overstatement in cause; for example, if some one has stipulated from you—"Do you promise to give the slave Stichus or ten aurei?", and then sues for one or other of the alternatives. This is an over-claim, because in a stipulation of this kind the promisor has the choice of giving the money or the slave. If, therefore, a plaintiff claims only the slave or only the money he robs the defendant of his election, and improves his own position at his expense. He ought to frame his claim in the alternative, following the words of the stipulation. Similarly, there is an overclaim if the plaintiff, having stipulated in general terms for a slave, or for wine or for purple, sues for this particular slave Stichus, or for wine of Campania, or for Tyrian purple. Even if the thing claimed is worth very little, none the less there is an overclaim, for it is often more convenient for a defendant to give a thing of greater value.

33e. But all this is now disused, and the law is confined within the limits of two constitutions, the first issued by the Emperor Zeno, the second by ourselves.<sup>91</sup> Zeno's constitution says what must be done where there is an overclaim in respect of time. In all other cases our constitution condemns the plaintiff to pay to the defendant thrice the amount of the expense which he has incurred in consequence of the overclaim, as mentioned above (sec. 24). 34. If in his statement of claim the plaintiff has demanded less than that to which he was entitled, for instance five instead of ten, or part of the land, when he was entitled to the whole, he runs no risk, because Zeno's constitution directs the judge none the less to condemn the defendant for the balance in the same action. 35. If a person in

<sup>90a</sup> This was the *actio de eo quod certo loco*.

<sup>91</sup> Cod. 3. 10. 1 and 2.

error claims one thing instead of another he runs no risk, for we allow him, when the truth is ascertained, to correct his mistake in the same proceedings; suppose, for instance, he has claimed the slave Eros when he should have claimed the slave Stichus or has stated that something was due to him under a testament, when in fact it was due upon a stipulation.

36. There are some actions in which we do not always get the whole of what is due to us, but sometimes the whole, sometimes less. For instance when the action relates to the peculium of a son or a slave, if the amount of the peculium is sufficient to satisfy the demand the father or owner is condemned to pay the whole; if it is insufficient he is condemned to the extent of the peculium. What is meant by peculium is explained in Title VII of this Book (*supra*, p. 354). 37. Again, if a woman sues for the recovery of her dos the rule is that the husband is to be condemned to the extent of his ability, that is so far as his means allow. Consequently, if his means admit of it, he is condemned to pay the whole amount, but, if not, only to the extent of his ability to pay. Further, the amount which may be claimed as dos is reduced by the husband's right of retention for necessary expenses incurred upon the dotal property,<sup>92</sup> for these *ipso jure* reduce the dos, as will be found explained more fully in the Digest.

38. If a person brings an action against his parent or patron and in proceedings between partners the plaintiff gets judgment for what the defendant is able to pay and no more. The same applies when a donor is sued on his promise to give.

39. The right to set off an opposing claim often has the effect that a plaintiff recovers less than the amount due to him. For, as explained above (sec. 30), the judge may make an equitable estimate of what is due from the plaintiff to the defendant in respect of the same set of circumstances and condemn the defendant to pay the balance. 40. If an insolvent has made cession of his goods and subsequently acquires property sufficient to justify such a course, the creditors may take fresh proceedings and recover what he is able to pay, for it would be inhuman to condemn without limit a man who is already despoiled of his fortune.

#### NOTE ON SECS. 30, 39.

These sections relate to the subject of compensation or set-off. In *bona fide* actions the words of the formula—*quidquid ex fide bona dare facere oportet* (§ 714)—empowered the judge to take account of counter-claims arising *ex eadem causa* and to give judgment accordingly. The Emperor Marcus, we are told in the text, allowed counter-claims to be asserted also in *stricti juris* actions by means of the *exceptio doli* (*opposita doli mali exceptione compensatio inducitur*). Since these actions always arose out of a unilateral

<sup>92</sup> Cod. 5. 13. 1, 7 Property retained by the wife was called *parapherna* (a Greek word meaning outside the dos). It was usually managed by the husband as his wife's mandatary. Cod. 5. 14. 8; Dig. 23. 3. 9, 3. For the wife's *paraphernalia* in English Law (a term of very limited application) see Blackstone, *Commentaries*, II, 355.

transaction, the counter-claim was necessarily *ex dispari causa*. Justinian allowed set-off in every kind of action (except the action of deposit and actions for the recovery of land wrongfully occupied),<sup>93</sup> provided, of course, that claim and counter-claim were of the same kind and nature (money against money—goods of a kind against goods of the same kind, etc.), so that they could be set off one against the other. Further, the counter-claim must be liquid,<sup>94</sup> *i.e.*, ascertained or easily ascertainable. In such cases the compensation is said to take place *ipso jure*. *Compensationes ex omnibus actionibus ipso jure fieri sancimus* (Cod.)—*ut actiones ipso jure minuant* (Inst.). This phrase has given endless difficulty. It is now thought to mean merely that the set-off need not be expressed in the pleadings (Buckl. *M.* p. 406). The traditional view was that as soon as claim and counter-claim co-existed, there was *pro tanto* a mutual cancellation as if by a reciprocal payment. There is a text in the Code (4. 31. 4) which lends itself to this interpretation. It has influenced modern Codes, which treat compensation as one of the ways in which an obligation is extinguished. See in particular *C.C.* art. 1290, which says: “La compensation s’opère de plein droit par la seule force de la loi, même à l’insu des débiteurs.” But the Roman Law, *i.e.* the *Corpus Juris*, always regards *compensatio* as a question of procedure. For more detailed information Girard and Buckland may be consulted. The text sec. 39 *per incuriam* seems to limit *compensatio* to claims arising from the same set of circumstances (*ex eadem causa*), but we have seen that this was not Justinian’s law. G 4. 66.

## TITLE XII

### *Of actions perpetual and temporal, and what actions may be brought by and against heirs*

Formerly, until limits were fixed by imperial constitutions, § 686. actions based upon statutes, *senatusconsulta* or imperial constitutions might be brought without limit of time, but the life of actions derived from the special jurisdiction of the praetor was usually limited to one year, this being the duration of the praetor’s authority. Sometimes, however, they were perpetual, in the sense that they continued within the limits fixed by the constitutions; such are the actions given to the *bonorum possessor* and to others § 680. who are in the place of heirs. The action for manifest theft, although of praetorian origin, is perpetual, because the praetor thought it absurd that it should not last beyond the year.

1. It is not the case that all actions which are competent at civil law or are given by the praetor against a person are equally competent or given against his heir. Thus, it is an established rule of law that penal actions arising from delict, such as the actions of theft, robbery, *injuria*. and *damnum injuria datum*, do not lie § 685.

<sup>93</sup> Cod. 4. 31. 14, 2.

<sup>94</sup> Cod. 4. 31. 14, 1.

against heirs. But actions of this kind are competent *to* heirs and the praetor does not refuse them, with the exception of the *actio injuriarum* and any other of the like kind. It sometimes happens that even an action on contract does not lie against an heir. This happens when the action arises out of fraudulent conduct on the part of a testator, and the heir has derived no advantage from the fraud.<sup>95</sup> If one of the penal actions above mentioned has reached the point of *litis contestatio* between the parties it is transmitted to and against heirs.

2. In conclusion it must be remarked that if a defendant satisfies the plaintiff's claim before judgment it is the judge's duty to absolve him, though at the time when issue was joined the circumstances were such that the defendant ought to be condemned. This is the meaning of the old maxim that all actions give the power of absolution (*omnia judicia absolutoria esse*).

G. 4 114.

### TITLE XIII

#### *Of exceptions*

We must now consider exceptions. These have been introduced for the benefit of defendants; for it often happens that though an action is good in law, it is inequitable in relation to the defendant in question.

§ 722.

1. For instance, suppose that in answer to a stipulation you have made a promise which you would not have made if you had not been coerced by fear, induced by fraud, or misled by error; it is plain that you are legally bound and, if the promisee brings an action against you alleging that you ought to give, his claim is well founded in law, but since it is unfair that you should be condemned, you are allowed to resist the action by pleading the *exceptio metus* or the *exceptio doli mali* or an exception based upon the circumstances of the case.

2. The law is the same if on the pretext of making a loan of money a person has stipulated from another for a payment [*i.e.* repayment of the loan] and in fact the loan has never been made. You can certainly be called upon to pay, because you are bound by the stipulation, but, since it is unfair that you should be condemned, it is settled that you may raise in your defence the plea that the money was not paid (*exceptio non numeratae pecuniae*). We have spoken of this defence in an earlier part of this book and mentioned that we have reduced the limit of time within which it is available.

P. 301.

3. Again, if the creditor has promised the debtor not to sue him, the debtor remains liable none the less, because obligations are not in every case extinguished by agreement between the parties; and consequently an action conceived in the form "if it appears that he ought to give" is well founded. But since it would be unfair that he should be condemned contrary to the terms of the pact he may plead the *exceptio pacti conventi*.

<sup>95</sup> This statement is contradicted by other texts in the Digest. See Moyle *ad loc.*

4. Again, if the creditor has challenged the debtor to swear, and the debtor has sworn that nothing is due from him, in law he remains bound, but since it would not be right (in the circumstances) to go into the question of perjury, the defendant, if sued upon his obligation, may plead the *exceptio jurisjurandi*. In actions in rem, too, exceptions may be needed; for example, if a plaintiff has challenged the possessor to swear, and the possessor has sworn that the property is his, and, in spite of this, the plaintiff proceeds to vindicate it, although his statement of claim alleging that the thing belongs to him may be true, it is nevertheless unfair that the possessor (having sworn at the instance of the plaintiff) should be condemned. 5. Once more, if I have taken proceedings against you in rem or in personam, this does not extinguish my right of action, and so in strict law I can repeat my claim in a subsequent action, but you may call in aid the *exceptio rei judicatae*.<sup>95a</sup> 6. The above cases may suffice to illustrate the nature of an exception. How many and various are the causes which give rise to exceptions may be seen by any one who will consult the Digest, where the matter is more fully treated. 7. Some exceptions are based upon statutes, or enactments having statutory force, others are derived from the jurisdiction of the praetor. 8. Exceptions are distinguished as perpetual or peremptory, and temporary or dilatory. 9. Perpetual or peremptory exceptions always bar the plaintiff's claim and destroy his cause of action. Such are the *exceptio metus*, the *exceptio doli mali* and the *exceptio pacti conventi*, when there is an unqualified agreement not to sue. 10. Temporary or dilatory exceptions are temporary obstacles, which have the effect of delaying the plaintiff's action; as when there is an agreement not to sue for a certain time, for example, for five years; for nothing prevents the plaintiff from bringing his action when the time has elapsed. Therefore, if people who want to bring an action are confronted with an agreement not to sue for a certain time or anything of the kind, they ought to defer their action and bring it later. This is why these exceptions are termed dilatory. If they bring the action within the time-limit and the defendant pleads the exception, they take nothing by their action in consequence of the exception. Formerly, they could not bring a fresh action later, because the whole cause of action was consumed and lost by being brought into Court. But nowadays the consequences are less serious. The plaintiff who is too precipitate in bringing his action is required to postpone his action for twice the time of the original delay, whether this was voluntarily accorded by the plaintiff himself or implied in the nature of the action, and the other party need not enter a defence until he has been fully indemnified for all the costs of the former action. This is provided by Zeno's constitution on over-claims in point of time (*tempore plus petitio*).<sup>96</sup>

§ 727.

§ 729.

G. 4. 123.

<sup>95a</sup> The *exceptio rei in iudicium deductae* of Gaius (3. 181) is not mentioned, because *litis contestatio* no longer consumed the right of action (§ 630).

<sup>96</sup> Cod. 3. 10. 1; Inst. 4. 6. 33b.



11. There are exceptions which are dilatory in respect of the person who brings the action. An example of these is the exception which is taken when the plaintiff is represented by a procurator who is not qualified to act as such, for example, a soldier or a woman. Formerly exceptions might be taken on the ground of the infamy of the representative or of the person represented, but since we have found that they were no longer met with in practice we declare them abolished.

## TITLE XIV

### *Of replications*

Sometimes it happens that an exception which at first sight seems just is found to be unfairly prejudicial to the plaintiff. In this event the plaintiff must call in aid another allegation, called a replication, because it rebuts and annuls the effect of the exception. For example, if it has been agreed that the plaintiff shall not sue, and afterwards there is a contrary agreement allowing him to do so; then, if he sues, and the defendant pleads that he is to be condemned only if there was no agreement not to sue, the exception is fatal to the plaintiff's case, for there was in fact such an agreement, even though there was a later agreement to the contrary. But since it is inequitable that the plaintiff should be barred, he will be allowed a replication based upon the subsequent pact.

1. Again, it may happen that a replication which at first sight seems just is unfairly prejudicial to the defendant. When this is the case he may have recourse to another allegation called a duplication.

2. And this, in turn, may be met by a triplication.

3. All these exceptions may be carried even further than we have indicated, if the diversity of business transactions requires it, as is fully explained in the Digest.

4. The exceptions which may be pleaded by a debtor are usually available to his sureties; and rightly, because what is demanded of sureties is, in effect, demanded of the principal debtor, because he may be required in an *actio mandati* to reimburse them what they have paid on his account. Consequently, if a creditor has promised not to sue the principal debtor, his sureties may plead the *exceptio pacti de non petendo*, just as if they had themselves been parties to the agreement.<sup>97</sup> But some exceptions are not available to sureties. For example, if a debtor has made cession of his goods and a creditor sues him, he may plead the exception, "unless he has made cession of his goods", but this exception is not allowed to sureties. This is obvious, because when a man takes sureties for a debt, the thing which he has above everything in view is that, if his debtor becomes insolvent, he may be able to come upon the sureties for payment.

<sup>97</sup> i.e., in the absence of a contrary intention. Dig. 2. 14. 21, 5; 22.

## IV. INTERDICTS, AND OTHER PRAETORIAN INSTITUTIONS

744. An interdict was an order issued by the praetor requiring the person to whom it was addressed to do or not to do the thing indicated in the order. It might assume one of three forms—*viz.*, (1) an order to produce (*exhibeas*); (2) an order to restore (*restituas*); (3) a prohibition (*veto*). From this results the principal division of interdicts into exhibitory, restitutory and prohibitory. Examples of each will be found in the text. 4 15 1

745. Interdicts might be matter of public law or of private law. Examples of the first are the prohibition to build on sacred ground or to impede the navigation of a public river. Where public interests were in question the interdict was popular, *i.e.*, any member of the public might ask for it. But the infringement of a public right might affect private interests and so give rise to the usual private process,<sup>98</sup> as in English law an action lies in respect of a public nuisance from which the plaintiff has suffered particular damage beyond that suffered by him in common with other members of the public.

746. There were many interdicts of private law. The possessory interdicts were the most frequent and of outstanding importance. They were directed to acquiring, retaining or regaining possession (*adipiscendae vel retinendae vel recipiendae possessionis causa*). This is the second division of interdicts, not indeed of all, but within the possessory group. 4 15 2.

747. Interdict procedure, as we shall see, followed the model of an ordinary action. This implies a plaintiff and a defendant. But in the interdicts for retaining possession neither party was plaintiff or defendant more than the other. This introduced into the procedure a complication to be explained below. Interdicts of this kind are termed double. All others are simple. This is the third division of interdicts. 4 15 7

748. All interdicts proceeded from the praetor. Some were given in support of a civil law right. Most were created by himself.

749. It might be supposed that an interdict was issued after inquiry, in the expectation that it would be immediately obeyed. But this was not so. In form absolute, the praetor's order was in intention conditional. He did not say "obey at your peril", but "obey if you ought to". This permitted a reference to a *judex* or *arbiter* to determine whether the person to whom the interdict was addressed ought

<sup>98</sup> Dig 43 8 (*ne quid in loco publico vel itinere fiat*) 2. 2.

to obey the order to produce or to restore, or had disobeyed the prohibition. The question will be, in other words, whether he comes within the scope of the order. It rests with him to raise the question. If he does not, the interdict takes effect as a mandatory injunction to be enforced by such means as the praetor sees fit. If he does raise the question and it is decided against him, the proceedings culminate not as might be expected in a peremptory order or in the infliction ex officio of a penalty, but as in any ordinary action in a pecuniary condemnation.

750. But there is a complication. In all interdicts the defendant may, and in some cases must, enter into a procedural wager to pay a penal sum if the case goes against him. This is not in substitution for the action for damages, but in addition to it.

751. If the interdict is prohibitory the proceedings are penal. The defendant has no choice. If the interdict is exhibitory or restitutory he may elect to litigate without a penalty, but he must make his decision before leaving the praetor's Court by asking for an arbiter.<sup>99</sup> He then gets a formula arbitraria; so-called, not because it is a reference to an arbiter, but because the arbiter is instructed to condemn, if the defendant does not obey the direction to exhibit or restore—*nisi arbitrio tuo exhibeat (vel restituat)*. By exhibiting or restoring forthwith he escapes the effect of the condemnation, which is conditional upon his failure to do so. How the amount of the condemnation was assessed does not appear. It would probably be fixed arbitrarily by *jusjurandum in litem*.

752. If the proceedings are penal, because they must be, or because the defendant has not chosen the alternative procedure, the parties are required to make a wager on the result of the litigation. As in all procedural wagers, this consists in a stipulation and a re-stipulation. The plaintiff says to the defendant: "Do you promise to pay me so much, if you have disobeyed the praetor's order?" Answer, "I promise". The defendant says to the plaintiff: "Do you promise to pay me so much if I have not disobeyed the praetor's order?" Answer, "I promise". Then the case goes to trial on claim and counter-claim for a sum certain—two *condictiones certae pecuniae*. The decision of these two actions will decide which party has won the wager. But this does not formally decide the main issue whether the defendant has disobeyed the inter-

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<sup>99</sup> G. 4. 164.

dict. This, too, must be referred.<sup>100</sup> If the case goes against the defendant he will have to pay the amounts incurred under each of the two stipulations and in addition the amount of the condemnation on the principal issue. This he may escape by prompt exhibition (or restoration), but he will not escape the double penalty of the wager. Though this procedure involves three distinct references to the arbiter, the decision of one is a decision of the others.

753. The double interdicts—*uti possidetis* and *utrubi*—involved a further complication. These were usually employed to determine which of the parties was to have the advantageous position of defendant in an action brought to vindicate the property, in other words to determine who was entitled to be maintained in possession. Since both claim to be so, neither can be regarded as plaintiff or defendant rather than the other; and so, as Gaius puts it, the praetor uses the same language to both,<sup>1</sup> forbidding each to do violence to the kind of possession which the interdict is designed to protect. What that is appears from its terms—in *uti possidetis*: “I forbid any violence being done to prevent you two continuing to possess as you do now”;—in *utrubi*: “I forbid any violence being done to prevent that one of you with whom [*e.g.*] the slave in question has been for the greater part of this year from taking the said slave away with him”. But it is not any kind of possession that the praetor will aid with his interdict. It must be not clandestine, or contested or precarious in relation to the other party—*nec clam, nec vi, nec precario ab adversario*.<sup>2</sup>

754. Having ordered the parties not to do violence to possession, the praetor, curiously enough, forthwith requires them to do so. This is what is called conventional violence—(*vis ex conventu*).<sup>3</sup> It was a formal aggression, designed to clear the ground of unnecessary controversy as to matter of fact. Then the issue as to the right to be maintained in possession is remitted to the judge on the hypothesis that A has been disturbed in his lawful possession by B and on the hypo-

<sup>100</sup> G. 4. 165.

<sup>1</sup> G. 4. 160.

<sup>2</sup> This condition is embodied in the more complete formula for *uti possidetis* preserved in the Digest. *Uti [nunc] eas aedes, quibus de agitur nec vi nec clam nec precario alter ab altero possidetis quo minus ita possideatis vim fieri veto.* Dig. 43. 17. 1 pr. The word “nunc” is supplied from Gaius. For *utrubi* the formula is reconstructed as follows: *utrubi hic homo quo de agitur maiore parte huiusce anni nec vi nec clam nec precario ab altero fuit quo minus is eum ducat vim fieri veto.* Dig. 43. 31. 1 pr.; Buckl. *T.* p. 734; *M.* p. 416. Justinian assimilated *utrubi* to *uti possidetis*. Inst. 4. 15. 4a.

<sup>3</sup> Buckl. *T.* p. 740; *M.* p. 419.

thesis that B has been disturbed in his lawful possession by A. Each hypothesis calls for a wager, each wager for two stipulations, four in all. The judge must decide the issue of each stipulation, and, further, the principal question, whether the interdict has been disobeyed by A or B, assessing the damage. But this is not all. One of the parties must have interim possession *pendente lite*. The praetor puts it up to auction (*fructuum licitatio*) and assigns it to the party who makes the higher bid secured by stipulation (*stipulatio fructuaria*). Here is another question to refer, *viz.*, the right to the interim possession, and, lastly, there is the question of the value of the fruits, which is not the same as the right to take them.<sup>4</sup> This makes seven questions to go to the *judex*, but substantially there is only one question at issue, the right to be maintained in possession. The party against whom the judge pronounces his decision incurs the double penalty of the two wagers and the condemnation, perhaps in a nominal sum, for having done violence to the other's possession. Further, if he was given interim possession, to which, as the event proves, he was not entitled, he will have to pay to the other party the amount of the fructuary stipulation<sup>5</sup> and the value of the fruits, and the victorious litigant will have a further reference to a *judex* or *arbiter* for recovery of possession or damages. This was called the *judicium Cascellianum sive secutorium*.<sup>6</sup>

755. This, or something like it, so far as can be gathered from the imperfect text of Gaius, was the interdict procedure in his time. Like an ordinary action, it postulates the voluntary co-operation of the parties. But what if one of the parties was recalcitrant—refused to play the game—would not offer the *vis ex conventu*—would not make the wager, and so forth? The praetor issued a secondary interdict (*interdictum secundarium*),<sup>7</sup> which it may be supposed was short, sharp and decisive, though the view is also held that here too there was a further reference in which the defendant could assert a third party's right to possess as an answer to plaintiff's claim.<sup>8</sup> Unhappily there is a gap in the text.

756. What has been said relates to interdict procedure in

<sup>4</sup> G. 4. 167.

<sup>5</sup> If the fructuary stipulation had been omitted—*omissa fructuaria stipulatione*—the question of liability for the amount of the bid was the subject of a separate reference based directly upon the result of the licitation. This was called *judicium fructuarium*. G. 4. 169. There was some difference of procedure.

<sup>6</sup> G. 4. 166 *in fine*; Buckl. *T.* p. 741; *M.* p. 419. It may have derived its name from Aulus Cascellius, a jurist of the age of Augustus. Dig. 1. 2. 2, 45.

<sup>7</sup> G. 4. 170.

<sup>8</sup> Girard, p. 1127.

the period of the formula. It seems likely that there was an early and more summary procedure by interdict in the period of the *legis actio*. But nothing is known. In Justinian's system the interdict procedure above described was wholly disused. There was no difference between interdicts and actions. 4. 15. 8.

757. The interdict was not the only praetorian institution which lay outside the main course of the ordinary action. There were besides *restitutio in integrum*, *missio in possessionem* and the praetorian stipulations.

758. *Restitutio in integrum*<sup>9</sup> was a praetorian remedy granted after inquiry<sup>10</sup> into the circumstances to a person who had suffered prejudice from some act or event which had legal consequences, and who on equitable principles was entitled to relief. It was given for various reasons. Paul<sup>11</sup> enumerates fear, fraud, change of status, just error, necessary absence, and minority (there were some others). Most of these explain themselves. Change of status means *capitis deminutio minima*.<sup>12</sup> We have seen above that the praetor allowed creditors to pursue the property of the *adrogatus* in the hands of the *adrogator*—*rescissa capitis deminutione* (§§ 102, 680). This can be described as *restitutio* only in a general sense, for it took effect by virtue of the fiction in the formula without previous inquiry and special licence. Absence has reference to the special case of *usucapion*, when the person against whom time was running, owing to his own or the possessor's absence, was unable to arrest its course, but it was extended to many other cases, for example, failure to put in a timely appearance in legal proceedings. As a rule, the praetor did not actively intervene to restore the *status quo*, but, allowed the person entitled to restitution to use actions and defences which had the same effect. In particular he would give *litis restitutio*, which cancelled a *litis contestatio* and put the parties back where they were before (D. 4. 1. 7, 1). The oldest and always the most important grounds of relief were minority and absence. The first,<sup>13</sup> which was a continuation of the policy of the *lex Plaetoria* (§ 126), was particularly favoured. *Restitutio* was an unusual remedy, which was not given when there was an adequate remedy at law,<sup>14</sup> but it was preferred to the *actio doli* because of the infaming char- 4 6. 3

<sup>9</sup> Girard, pp. 1129-30; Buckl. *T.* pp. 719, 723; *M.* pp. 410, 411.

<sup>10</sup> Dig. 4. 1. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Paul *Sent.* 1. 7. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Dig. 4. 5. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Dig. 4. 4. 1, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Dig. 4. 4. 16.

acter of the latter.<sup>15</sup> In general, it was not accorded unless the party seeking it and the party against whom it was sought could both be restored to their former position. Thus, if a vendor sought relief from a contract of sale, he obtained it only on the terms of restoring the price, or, if he was a minor, his enrichment.<sup>16</sup> As a rule, restitutio was only effectual against parties to the litigation and their civil or praetorian successors. In the case of minors it sometimes operated in rem,<sup>17</sup> even against *bona fide* third parties, such as a sub-purchaser. It must be claimed, before Justinian within an annus utilis, under Justinian within four anni continui from the cessation of the cause which justified the application. In process of time the development of the system of actions and exceptions confined the restitutio within narrow limits. Apart from the case of minority, its function belongs rather to the field of procedure than to that of substantive law.

759. *Missio in possessionem* was a process by which a person was placed in possession of another person's property, either of his whole estate (*missio in bona*) or of some particular thing (*missio in rem*). Of the first we have seen an instance in the case of insolvency (§ 735). An example of the second is the case of *damnum infectum*. If the owner of land or a house, apprehending damage from the ruinous state of a neighbour's building, complained to the praetor, and the neighbour declined the stipulation to be presently mentioned, the praetor would put the complainant in possession as a measure of precaution. This was *de facto* possession, not (so-called) juristic possession, but if the owner remained recalcitrant, a second decree might follow giving juristic possession, which might lead ultimately to acquisition of ownership by usucapion.<sup>18</sup> Unless some measure of precaution was taken as provided by law, and damage actually occurred, the aggrieved proprietor was without remedy. The neighbour could escape liability by abandoning, for example, the tiles from his ruinous house which had caused the damage. The victim had the poor, and only, satisfaction of letting loose his vengeance against the materials,<sup>19</sup> as he might against a wild beast escaped from his neighbour's menagerie.

760. Praetorian stipulations were stipulations into which the praetor required a person to enter as an incident of legal proceedings and in many other cases. Examples of the first

<sup>15</sup> Dig. 4. 1. 7, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Dig. 4. 4. 24, 4; 27, 1 (*in fine*).

<sup>17</sup> Dig. 4. 4. 13, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Dig. 41. 2. 3, 23. In other cases *missio* gave a possession, which was usually *de facto*, sometimes juristic.

<sup>19</sup> Girard, p. 279.

kind are the *cautio judicatum solvi*, the *cautio de rato* (or *ratam rem dominum habiturum*). Examples of the second kind were the stipulations required of a tutor (*rem pupilli salvam fore*) or of a usufructuary (§ 233). The *cautio de damno infecto* was called for in the circumstances above described. The praetor required the neighbour to secure the complainant by stipulation against eventual damage. A somewhat similar case was that of *operis novi nuntiatio*. If my neighbour was carrying out, or about to carry out operations upon his land, certain or likely to affect adversely my enjoyment of my property, after notice on the spot I could summon him before the praetor.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile he was obliged to suspend operations.<sup>21</sup> The praetor on proof that the complaint had some foundation would require him to enter into a stipulation, with or without security, either to restore the land to its former condition, or, at the option of the complainant, to make compensation if he was found not to be acting within his rights. He might, for instance, be constructing an embankment which would divert water on to my land in volume or in direction other than its normal flow. It must be kept in mind that the process of *nuntiatio* only applied to works contemplated or incomplete. If the work had been carried out the interdict *quod vi aut clam* and other remedies were available.<sup>22</sup> It was said to be *vi factum* if it was carried out in the face of a prohibition, commonly indicated by the symbolism of throwing a pebble (*jactus lapilli*). It was said to be *clam factum* if it was done in the face of a controversy actual or expected.<sup>23</sup>

## THE INSTITUTES

### BOOK IV (TITLS. XV, X, XI, XVI—XVIII)

#### TITLE XV

#### *Of interdicts*

It remains to speak of interdicts or of the actions which have taken their place. Interdicts were formal pronouncements of the praetor ordering something or prohibiting something. The most frequent occasion for an interdict was when parties were contending on a question of possession or quasi-possession.

§ 744.

1. The principal classification of interdicts is that they are prohibitory, or restitutory, or exhibitory. Prohibitory interdicts are those which forbid something to be done, for example, forbid

<sup>20</sup> Dig. 39. 1. 5, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Dig. 39. 1. 1 pr.; 8, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Dig. 39. 1. 1, 1: 43. 24.

<sup>23</sup> Dig. 43. 24. 1, 5 and 6; 50. 17. 73, 2.



violence to be offered to a person in clean possession,<sup>24</sup> forbid interference with the exercise of a right of sepulture, forbid building on sacred ground or doing anything in a public river or its bank of a nature to impede navigation. Restitutory interdicts are those which order restoration, for example, order a person who possesses as heir or without pretence of title to yield possession of things belonging to the inheritance to the praetorian successor, or order possession to be given back to a person who has been violently ejected from the possession of land. Exhibitory interdicts are those which order production, for example, of a person whose freedom is in question, or of a freedman, of whom the patron wishes to require services, or production to a parent of children in his power. Some think that the term interdict is properly confined to prohibitory orders because the word *interdicere* means to notify a person that a thing must not be done and that restitutory and exhibitory orders are properly termed "decrees", but the practice is to call all these orders interdicts because they are *interdicta*, orders rendered between two persons.

§ 69

§ 746.

2. Interdicts [more precisely possessory interdicts] are further classified as interdicts to obtain, to retain, and to recover possession.

§ 373.

3. An interdict to obtain possession is given to the bonorum possessor. It is called the interdict *quorum bonorum*, and its effect is that anyone who as heir or without pretence of title is in possession of goods belonging to an estate, is required to yield possession to the person to whom "possession of goods" has been given. A person is said to possess "as heir", if he thinks that he is heir. He possesses "as possessor", if without legal title he is in possession of something which is part of an inheritance, or, of the whole inheritance, knowing that it does not belong to him. This interdict is said to be for the purpose of obtaining the inheritance because it is available only to the person who is trying for the first time to get possession; accordingly, it is not available to a person who has got possession and lost it. Another interdict for obtaining possession

§ 247.

is the interdictum *Salvianum*, which is given to the owner of land, to get possession of the movable property of a tenant-farmer, which he has pledged to secure the rent. 4. For retaining possession we

§ 753.

have the interdicts *uti possidetis* and *utrubi*, which are used when there is a dispute as to ownership, and the preliminary question is raised which of the litigants should defend, which should bring the action. For until it is ascertained which of the two has possession a petitory action is impossible, for law and reason unite in saying that one person must be in possession and another person must bring the action; and, since it is far more advantageous to be defendant, there is often or almost always a great fight over the question of possession. The advantage of having the possession is that even if the possessor is not owner, yet if the owner cannot prove his title, the possession is left undisturbed, and consequently when it is difficult to say which of the litigants has the right on his side, the practice is to decide the case against the plaintiff. 4a. The inter-

<sup>24</sup> *Sine vitio possidenti, infra*, sec. 4a.

dict uti possidetis relates to the possession of land or a house, the interdict utrubi to the possession of movables. Formerly the effect of the two interdicts was very different. In uti possidetis the decision went in favour of the party who was in possession at the time of the interdict, provided that his possession was not obtained by violence, or clandestinely or by permission from the other party (nec vi nec clam nec precario ab adversario), even if he had obtained it by any of these methods from a third party. \*In utrubi the victory went to the party who was in possession nec vi nec clam nec precario ab adversario for the greater part of the year preceding. But to-day this distinction is no longer observed and both interdicts as regards possession have the same effect, namely, that the victory goes to the party who at the time that the case is ripe for trial possesses nec vi nec clam nec precario ab adversario.

5. A person is held to possess not only if he possesses in person but also if any other person is in possession on his account. Such person need not be in his power; he may for instance be a tenant of land or of a house, or may have taken the thing by way of deposit or loan for use. This is what is meant by the saying that we retain possession by any one who possesses in our name. Indeed, possession may be retained by the mere intention to possess, for even though a man is not in possession himself, and no one is in possession on his account, still, if he left the property with no intention of abandoning possession but intending to come back, possession is retained. Through whom possession may be acquired has been explained in the Second Book (Tit. IX). It is quite clear that § 216. possession cannot be acquired by mere intention. 6. An interdict for recovering possession is given if a person has been violently ejected from land or from a house. The appropriate interdict is the interdict unde vi, whereby the ejector is compelled to restore possession to the person ejected even though in relation to the ejector the possession was violent, clandestine or precarious. But, as has been stated in an earlier Title, imperial constitutions provide that a person who has taken forcible possession forfeits the thing if it is his; if it belongs to another, he must give it back and in addition pay its estimated value to the victim of his aggression. 4. 2. 1. One who has dispossessed another by violence is further liable under the lex Julia de vi, whether the violence is private or public. 4. 18. 8. Violence is private, if it is not effected by armed force; if armed force has been employed, it is public. The term arms includes not only shields and swords and helmets, but also clubs and stones.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> In the earlier law a distinction was drawn between simple violence (called by the commentators *vis quotidiana*) and armed violence (*vis armata*). In the first case a plaintiff was required to show dispossession within the year and might be met by the plea that his possession was *vitiosa ab adversario* (G. 4. 154). In the second case there was no limit of time and the plaintiff was in any event entitled to be replaced in possession (G. 4. 155). This was an anticipation of the medieval *actio spoli*—*spoliatus ante omnia restitendus est*. By the time of Justinian this, as appears from

§ 747

7. The third division of interdicts is into simple and double. Simple interdicts are those in which one person is plaintiff, another defendant. All restitutory and exhibitory interdicts are of this character, for the person who demands exhibition or restitution is the plaintiff and the person from whom it is demanded is the defendant. Prohibitory interdicts may be either simple or double. They are simple when the praetor forbids something being done on sacred soil or in a public river or its bank; the person who demands that the thing should not be done is plaintiff, the person trying to do it is defendant. *Uti possidetis* and *utrubi* are double interdicts. They are called double, because either litigant is in the same position as the other, neither of them being plaintiff or defendant any more than the other, so that each one of them appears in both capacities. 8. It is superfluous to speak of the course and consequence of interdicts in the old law; for whenever proceedings are taken *extra ordinem*, as is always the case at the present day, the issue of an interdict is not necessary, but the matter is decided without an interdict just as if an action had been given in the circumstances in which the praetor used to grant an interdict.

## TITLE X

### *Of representatives in litigation*

A man may bring an action in his own name or in the name of another. This last occurs when he sues in the capacity of procurator, tutor or curator, though in former days no representation in litigation was allowed unless the action was brought on behalf of the people,<sup>26</sup> by an assertor of freedom, or by a tutor on behalf of his ward. The *lex Hostilia*<sup>27</sup> further provided that actions of theft might be brought in the name of persons who were in the power of the enemy, or absent on business of State, and of the wards of such persons. It was, however, very inconvenient that no representation was allowed in bringing or defending an action and the practice grew up of litigating by procurators, for illness, age or necessary absence from home and many other causes often prevented a man attending to his affairs in person. 1. It is not required that a procurator should be appointed by any special form of words or in the presence of the opposite party<sup>28</sup> (indeed, as a rule he does not know anything about it), for any person whom you allow to bring or defend your action is understood to be your procurator for the purpose. 2. How tutors and curators are appointed has been explained in the First Book.

the text, was the general rule, the distinction between *vis quotidiana* and *vis armata* having disappeared. But now in all cases proceedings must be taken within the year.

<sup>26</sup> *i.e.*, in the public interest for a penalty. Buckl. *T.* p. 694; *M.* p. 371.

<sup>27</sup> Otherwise unknown.

<sup>28</sup> In these respects the procurator differed from the cognitor. G. 4. 83, 84.

## TITLE XI

*Of taking security*

The old method of taking security was not the same as that now in use.

Formerly, if the action was in rem the possessor was required to give security, with the consequence that, if the case went against him and he did not restore the thing in question or pay the amount in which he was condemned, the plaintiff could bring a personal action against him or his sureties. This was called security for satisfaction of the judgment (*cautio judicatum solvi*). It was so-called because the plaintiff stipulated for payment of the sum adjudged to him. There was still greater reason for this, if the person against whom the action was brought was defending it on another person's behalf. On the other hand a plaintiff in a real action suing in his own name was not required to give security. If he was suing in a representative capacity, he was ordered to give security that his principal would ratify his acts (*cautio ratam rem dominum habiturum*), because there was the risk of the principal claiming the same property in another action. The edict required the same security to be given by tutors and curators suing in the name of their wards, but this was sometimes remitted.

1. This then was the law in the case of real actions. If the action was in personam, the rules were the same for the plaintiff as in the case of actions in rem. A defendant intervening on another person's account was always required to give security, for without security no one is considered to be competent to undertake another person's defence. But if he was defending in his own name, he need not give security for the satisfaction of the judgment. 2. But all of this is no longer in use. According to the modern practice, if a person is defending an action, real or personal, in his own name, he is not required to give security for the amount of the judgment, but merely a personal undertaking to submit to the jurisdiction until the case is decided. This varies with the standing of the defendant. It may be a promise accompanied by an oath, the so-called *juratoria cautio*, or a bare promise or a promise with surties. 3. If an action is brought or defended in a representative capacity the rules are as follows. The plaintiff, unless his authority to act is entered in the records of the Court, or the principal is present in Court to confirm it, must give security that the principal will ratify his acts. The same applies if a tutor or curator or any other person who has undertaken to conduct another person's affairs brings an action by a representative. 4. If a defendant appears and is prepared to appoint a procurator, he may come into Court and confirm the procurator's authority to represent him by entering into the usual stipulations *judicatum solvi*, or give security out of Court by binding himself as surety for his procurator in respect of all the clauses of the security for satisfaction of a judgment. Further, he must in either event give a hypothec over his property, which can be enforced against his heirs as well as himself, and must furnish a bond or security that he will be present in Court when sentence is pronounced, and that, if he fails to appear, his surety will satisfy the judgment unless there is an appeal. 5. If for any reason a defendant does not appear, and some one is willing to undertake his defence, he may do so whether in a real or personal action, giving security *judicatum solvi*, for, as observed above, it is an old rule that no one is competent to undertake another person's defence without giving security. 6. Acquaintance with the everyday practice of the Courts will make all this perfectly clear. 7. These rules are to be followed not only in our capital city, but also in the provinces.

## TITLE XVI

*Of the penalties incurred by reckless litigation*

The law has always been concerned to restrain reckless litigation. It does so today by imposing a pecuniary penalty, by the sanction of an oath, and by the fear of infamy.

4 6. 26

1. By our constitution<sup>29</sup> no defendant is allowed to put in his pleading until he has sworn that he has good grounds for defending the action. Sometimes a defendant who denies liability runs the risk of being condemned in double damages. This is, for example, the case in the *actio damni injuria* and in actions brought on legacies left to holy places (There are, of course, cases in which from the beginning the action is for a multiple of the damages, as for four-fold in the *actio furti manifesti* and for double in the *actio furti nec manifesti*; in these the action is always for more than the single value whether the defendant admits or denies.) Plaintiffs also are required to swear to their honesty, and, besides, an oath is required of the advocates on both sides. All this has replaced the ancient *actio calumniae*<sup>30</sup> for one tenth of the amount in dispute, which has entirely passed out of use. Besides this an unprincipled litigant has to indemnify the other party for his expenses and the costs of litigation. 2 There are some actions in which condemnation involves infamy. Such are the actions on theft, robbery, injuries (*actio injuriarum*), fraud (*actio de dolo*), guardianship, mandate and deposit (in these last cases when the action is direct, not when it is contrary), and the action on partnership (*actio pro socio*), which is always direct, so that any partner who is condemned is branded with infamy. In the case of the actions for theft, robbery, injury or fraud, this consequence follows not only in case of condemnation, but also if the action is compromised; and rightly so, for there is very much difference between liability on delict and liability on contract.

3. All actions begin with a summons (in *jus vocatio*) as provided in the praetor's edict. For the first step in the proceedings is to call the defendant in *jus*, that is before the magistrate. The praetor accords to parents and patrons (and to the children and parents of patrons of either sex) this special respect that their children and freedmen may not begin proceedings against them without applying for and obtaining permission to do so, subject to a penalty of fifty *solidi* if they disobey this order<sup>30a</sup>.

## TITLE XVII

*Of the office of the judge*

It remains to speak of the office of the judge. In the first place he must be careful to conform his judgment to statutes, imperial constitutions and usage.

§ 621.

1. Accordingly, if he is assigned to a noxal action, he must condemn in the terms.—"I condemn Publius Marcus to Lucius Titius in ten aurei or to surrender the noxa". 2. If the action is in rem and he decides against the plaintiff he must absolve the possessor, if against the possessor he must order him to restore the thing together with the fruits. If the possessor says that he cannot presently restore and his request for time seems to be made in good faith, it should be granted on the terms of his entering into a bond with a surety to pay the assessed damages if he fails to restore within the time allowed. The rule as to fruits is the same when the plaintiff claims an inheritance as when he claims a particular thing. As

<sup>29</sup> Cod. 2 58(59) 2 pr.

<sup>30</sup> G. 4 175

<sup>30a</sup> Dig. 2 4 25 (interpolated).

regards fruits which the possessor has culpably failed to gather, the rule is much the same in both actions, if the possession was *mala fide*. But in the case of the *bona fide* possessor no account is taken of fruits consumed or not gathered, that is, until proceedings have been instituted. But after that, fruits which the possessor has culpably failed to gather, or has gathered and consumed, are also taken into account. § 187.

3. If an action is brought *ad exhibendum*, it is not enough merely to produce the thing; the title to the thing must also be produced. That is to say, the plaintiff must get the title to the thing which he would have had if the thing had been produced when proceedings were first taken for its production. Accordingly, if during the course of the litigation the thing has become the property of the possessor by usucapion, he will now be less be condemned. Further, the judge must take account of *mesne profits*, that is of fruits which have accrued between the beginning of the proceedings and judgment. If the defendant says that he cannot produce immediately and asks for time, and does not seem to have any purpose of evasion, his request should be granted, conditionally upon his giving security for restitution. If he neither produces when ordered to do so by the judge nor gives security to produce at a later time, he must be condemned to the extent of the plaintiff's interest in having the thing produced when proceedings were first taken. 4. In the *actio familiae erciscundae* particular things must be adjudged to the heirs severally, and if this gives any one heir a disproportionate advantage he must, as explained above, adjust this by a money payment, and he must be condemned to compensate a co-heir, if he has gathered the fruits exclusively, or has damaged or consumed something belonging to the inheritance. This applies whether there are two or more than two co-heirs. 5. The same principles govern the *actio communi dividundo*, for division of property between owners in common, when it relates to several different things. If it relates to a single thing, as a piece of land which admits of physical partition, portions must be adjudged to the several co-owners with pecuniary adjustment, if necessary. If the thing does not admit of partition, a slave, for instance, or a mule, the whole must be adjudged to one co-owner, and he must compensate the other [or others] by a money payment. 4. G. 20.

6. In the *actio finium regundorum*, which is brought for the determination of boundaries, the judge must consider whether adjudication is necessary, as it will be, if it is desirable to have the boundaries more precisely defined than was previously the case. In this case it becomes necessary to adjudge to one owner a portion of the adjoining owner's land and the matter should be adjusted by a money payment. Another ground of condemnation in this action may be some dishonest conduct of one of the proprietors, for example stealthily removing landmarks or cutting down trees on the boundaries. Again, contumacious conduct is a ground of condemnation; for instance if opposition is offered to the judge's order for a survey to be made of the land.

7. In all these actions an order of adjudication of any property vests the ownership forthwith in the party concerned.

## TITLE XVIII

### *Of public proceedings*

Public proceedings do not follow the course of a private action and have no resemblance to the proceedings above described.

1. They are called public because they can usually be set in motion by any member of the public.

2. Of public proceedings some are capital, some are not capital. Capital proceedings are those which involve the extreme penalty of the law, interdiction of water and fire, deportation to an island, or condemnation to the mines. Proceedings which involve infamy and a pecuniary penalty are public, but not capital.

3. The following are instances of public proceedings. The *lex Julia majestatis* is directed against those who have conceived designs against the Emperor or the State. The penalty is death and posthumous infamy.

4. The *lex Julia de adulteris* punishes with the sword adultery and sodomy. The same statute attaches the penalty of stuprum to any one who corrupts a virgin or a widow of honourable standing. The penalty pronounced against offenders, if they are of the better classes, is forfeiture of half their goods; persons of low condition incur corporal punishment and relegation.

5. The *lex Cornelia de sicariis*<sup>31</sup> punishes with the sword of vengeance those who are guilty of homicide or go about armed with weapons with the design of homicide. The word weapon (*telum*), as Gaius points out in his commentary on the Twelve Tables, is commonly understood of a weapon of offence discharged from a bow, but it also means any weapon discharged from the hand, such as a stone, a block of wood, a piece of iron. It is derived from the Greek and means "thrown from a distance". The word *sicarii* comes from *sica*, meaning an iron knife. The same statute inflicts capital punishment on poisoners, that is men who by odious contrivances, whether by poison or by magical charms, bring about men's death, or sell to the public mischievous drugs.

6. Another statute—the *lex Pompeia de parricidiis*<sup>32</sup>—inflicts a strange punishment on a terrible crime. It enacts that, if any one has hastened the death of a parent or a son or of any one else to whom the term parricide applies, secretly or openly, or has procured the same, or been privy to such a crime even though unrelated to the victim, he is not to be punished by sword or fire or any other usual method, but is to be sewn up in a sack with a dog, a cock, a viper and a she-ape, and in this horrible prison is to be cast into the sea or into a river, so that living he shall be denied all use of the elements, and while he yet survives the air of heaven, and when he is dead, the boon of earth shall be withheld from him. If any other relative by blood or affinity is killed, the penalty is that prescribed by the *lex Cornelia de sicariis*.

7. The *lex Cornelia de falsis*<sup>33</sup> (on forgery), otherwise called the *lex Cornelia testamentaria*, punishes any one who forges a will or other instrument, or who seals, reads or substitutes any such forgery, or makes, engraves or impresses a false seal with guilty knowledge. The punishment in the case of slaves is death (as also under the statute *de sicariis et veneficis*), in the case of freemen, deportation.

8. The *lex Julia de vi publica seu privata* is directed against those who are guilty of violence armed or without arms. In the case of armed violence the punishment is deportation under the *lex Julia de vi publica*; if the violence is unarmed it is forfeiture of one third of the criminal's goods. Rape of a virgin or a widow, whether dedicated to religion or not, entails the death penalty on the perpetrators and on any one who has aided the outrage. Particulars will be found in our constitution.<sup>34</sup>

9. The *lex Julia peculatus* punishes those who steal money, or any other thing, public, sacred or religious. If judges embezzle public funds during

<sup>31</sup> B.C. 81.

<sup>32</sup> B.C. 52.

<sup>33</sup> n.c. 81.

<sup>34</sup> Cod. 9. 13.

their term of office they incur the death penalty. This applies also to those who aid them in the commission of the crime or with guilty knowledge receive the proceeds. Other persons who offend against this law are punished with deportation.

10. Public proceedings may also be taken based upon the *lex Fabia de plagiaris*.<sup>35</sup> The penalty is sometimes capital under imperial constitutions, sometimes less severe.

11. Other statutes giving rise to similar proceedings are the *lex Julia ambitus*, the *lex Julia repetundarum*, the *lex Julia de annona*, and the *lex Julia de residuis*, all of which deal with special offences.<sup>35</sup> They do not involve the penalty of death, but various lesser punishments.

12. We have given this summary account of public prosecutions, which may furnish you with a guide to the subject. You may with Heaven's help acquire a fuller knowledge from the study of the Digest or Pandects.

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<sup>35</sup> For these statutes see Moyle, *ad loc.*





## VOCABULARY

## SEC.

5. *pontifex maximus* = chief priest.
6. *rex sacrorum* = king of sacred rites.  
*auctoritas patrum* = sanction of the fathers, *i.e.*, patrician senators.
8. *senatusconsultum ultimum* = ultimate or final *senatusconsultum*.
22. *jus respondendi* = right of giving responses, *i.e.*, legal opinions.
35. *de adquirendo rerum dominio* = of the acquisition of the ownership of things.
57. *sui juris—alieni juris* = of one's own right—of another's right, *i.e.*, of independent and dependent status.
67. *libertus orcinus*. *Orcus* was the abode of the dead. *Orcinus* is the adjective.
69. *obsequium—operae—bona* = respect—services—property.
105. *adoptio plena—minus plena* = complete adoption—incomplete adoption.
115. *perpetua mulierum tutela* = perpetual tutelage of women.
119. *tutor dativus* = a tutor given or appointed.
124. *accusatio vel crimen suspecti tutoris* = accusation or charge brought against a suspected tutor.  
*satisdatio rem pupilli salvam fore* = security that the pupil's property shall be safe.
125. *Nemo post haec, etc.* Let no one hereafter ask of us the right of children, for by this law we grant it to all women.
157. *res habilis, titulusque, fides, possessio, tempus* = a thing capable of being owned, title, good faith, possession, lapse of time.
164. *dominium ex jure Quiritium* = ownership by right of the *Quirites* (Roman citizens).
166. *longissimi temporis praescriptio* = prescription of a very long time.
169. *litis aestimatio* = assessment of the matter in issue.
176. *actio ad exhibendum* = action for production.
180. *per medium filum aquae* = through the middle line of the water.
182. *superficies solo cedit* = the surface goes with the soil.  
*actio de tigno injuncto* = action about annexed material.
183. *jus tollendi* = the right of removal.
194. *traditio brevi manu—longa manu* = delivery with the short hand—with the long hand.  
*constitutum possessorium* = agreement to possess (instead of owning).
196. *traditio per cartam* = delivery by deed.
207. *donatio ante nuptias—propter nuptias* = a gift before marriage—on account of marriage.
212. *quod aequius melius est* = what is fairer and better.  
*lex Julia de fundo dotali* = the Julian statute about dotal land.
213. *actio rei uxoriae* = the action relating to the wife's property.
239. *usus transeundi personae datus* = use of transit given to a person.
- 240 (v). *ex tempore—ad tempus—sub conditione* = from a fixed date—to a fixed date—conditionally.

## SEC.

243. *cujus est solum, etc.* = the owner of the soil owns up to heaven and down to hell.
245. *lex commissoria* = condition of forfeiture.
248. *qui prior est tempore potior est jure* = the person who is first in time is preferred in right.
255. *animus sibi habendi* = intention to have for oneself.
279. *dies certus an—incertus quando* = a date certain whether, uncertain when.
306. *boni viri arbitratus* = the decision of a fair-minded man.
307. *actio ad supplendam legitimam* = action to make up the statutory portion.  
*petitio hereditatis* = suit claiming an inheritance.  
*bonorum possessio contra tabulas* = possession of goods against the will.
324. *jus antiquum* = old law.
379. *nova clausula, etc.* = Julian's new clause about joining with an emancipated son his children.
385. *ecclesia vivit lege Romana* = the Church lives under Roman Law.
392. *impubes* = a child beneath the age of puberty.
430. *reus stipulandi—reus promittendi* = party to a stipulation, to a promise.
450. *lex commissoria* = condition of rescission.
452. *venditio spei—rei speratae* = sale of a hope, of a thing hoped for.
460. *uti optimus maximusque* = as best and biggest.
462. *actio auctoritatis* = action of warranty.
463. *in duplo ejus quod mentitus est* = for double the extent of the deception.
- 470 n. *res perit domino* = the thing perishes for the owner; i.e., is at his risk.
489. *prout quisque habitaverit* = according to his actual occupation.
500. *mandatum credendae pecuniae* = a mandate for lending money.
509. *civilem actionem in factum, etc.* Labeo writes that a civil action should be given on the facts.
510. *precario accipiens* = the person who accepts precariously.
511. *Nuda pactio, etc.* = A nude pact does not beget an action, but begets an exception.
- 532 (e). *civiliter* = by civil law.
540. *solutionis gratia adjectus* = added for the purpose of payment.
544. *jus quaesitum tertio* = right acquired for a third person.
555. *utilis actio, etc.* = an adapted action on the analogy of the *actio institoria*—"and so, conversely, it must be said that an adapted action on the sale is available to the principal".
576. *Regula est, etc.* = The rule is that ignorance of law affects a man's rights, but not ignorance of fact.
579. *condictio ob causam datorum* = reclaim of things given for a purpose which has failed—*causa data causa non secuta* = purpose given, purpose not realised—*condictio ob turpem vel injustam causam* = reclaim on account of an immoral or illegal cause—*sine causa* = for

## SEC.

- want of cause—*ob causam finitam* = because the cause has ceased to exist—*odio furum* = from hatred of thieves.
615. *adversus infitiantem lis crescit* = the amount in suit is increased against the person who denies.
616. *fraus creditorum* = fraud on creditors.
633. *mandatum in rem suam* = a mandate in his own interest.
635. *res litigiosa* = thing in litigation.
645. *animus novandi* = intention to novate.
658. *ex jure manum conserere* = fighting out of Court.
677. *vindicatio in libertatem—in servitutem* = claiming as free—as a slave.
695. *exceptio rei in judicium deductae* = exception that the matter had been brought to trial.
724. *exceptio doli specialis vel praeteriti* = exception of special or past fraud—*generalis vel praesentis* = of general or present fraud.
727. *exceptio justi dominii* = exception of lawful ownership.
730. *beneficium competentiae, etc.* = benefit of competence—exception of what he is able to do.
735. *missus in possessionem* = the person put in possession.
754. *fructuum licitatio* = auctioning of the fruits.
760. *operis novi nuntiatio* = denunciation of new work.



## INDEX

[The references are to pages. References to the text of the Institutes are in italics.]

- Abgeleiteter Besitz, 175  
 Abrogation of laws by disuse, 37  
 Acceptilatio, 404, 408  
 Accessio, 127, 138, 140  
     possessionis, 119  
 Accursius, 21  
 Acquisition through agents, 152, 154  
 Actio, meaning of, 323, 412, 446  
     ad exhibendum, 375, 452, 471  
     ad supplendam legitimam, 209  
     aestimatoria,  
         in sale, 309  
         injuriarum, 382  
         on aestimatum, 335  
     auctoritatis, 307  
     calumniarum, 470  
     certae pecuniae creditae, 284, 295  
     commodati, 287, 436  
     communi dividundo, 122, 369, 416,  
         432, 450, 471  
     conducti, 319  
     confessoria, 156, 166, 422, 447  
     de aedibus incensis, 390  
     de arboribus succissis, 390, 421  
     de dote, 148, 451, 454  
     de eo quod certo loco, 453 n.  
     de modo agni, 308  
     de pastu pecoris, 390, 398  
     de pauperie, 398, 399  
     de peculio et de in rem verso, 352,  
         354, 448  
     de pecunia constituta, 336, 425, 448  
     de tigno injuncto, 129, 139  
     depensi, 362  
     depositi, 288, 436  
     doli, 344, 390, 452  
     empti, 312  
     ex stipulatu, 147, 148, 295, 434  
     ex testamento, 426  
     ex vendito, 485  
     exercitoria, 353, 354  
     familiae erciscundae, 325, 369, 432,  
         450, 471  
     fiduciae, 171, 333  
     finium regundorum, 432, 450, 471  
     furti, 373, 375, 379, 423, 449  
     hypothecaria, 172 n., 448, 452  
     injuriarum, 382, 385, 389, 456  
     institoria, 353, 354  
     judicati, 367, 441  
     jurisjurandi, 425, 448  
     Actio—continued.  
         legis Aquiliae, 389, 390, 450, 451  
         locati, 319  
         mandati, 329, 359, 364, 458  
         metus, 344, 423, 451, 452  
         negatoria, 156, 161, 166, 422, 447  
         negotiorum gestorum, 366, 368, 426  
         Pauliana in rem, 330, 423, 448  
         pignoratitia, 172 n., 289  
         praescriptis verbis, 305, 317, 319,  
             334  
         pro socio, 323, 326  
         prohibiti furti, 374  
         Publiciana in rem, 423, 447, 452  
         quanti minoris, 309  
         quasi-Serviana, 172 n., 448, 452  
         quod jussu, 352, 354  
         rationibus distrahendis, 87  
         recepticia, 448  
         reduhibitoria, 309  
         rei uxoriae, 147, 426, 451  
         rerum amotarum, 377  
         Rutiliana, 424, 443  
         Servi corrupti, 379, 450  
         Serviana (of landlord), 172, 448, 452  
         Serviana (of emptor bonorum), 424,  
             443  
         spolii, 467 n.  
         tributoria, 352, 354  
         tutela, 87, 94, 369, 426  
         vectigalis, 169  
         venditi, 312, 485  
         vi bonorum raptorum, 381, 450  
 Actions (in general), 422, 446  
     adjecticiae qualitates, 352, 354, 424  
     arbitrariae, 452  
     in factum, 424 n.  
     in rem, 422, 423 n.  
     in rem scriptae, 423  
     mixtae, 428, 449  
     penal, 426  
     populares, 428  
     utiles, 425  
 Actium, battle of, 14  
 Addictio, 418  
 Adire hereditatem, 217, 221  
 Adjudicatio,  
     acquisition by, 122, 160, 164  
     in formula, 432  
 Adjudicatus, 373, 418  
 Adolescentes, 89, 344

- Adoption, 68, 71, 79, 103  
 Adpromissio, adpromissor, 359  
 Adrogation,  
     as adoption, 68, 79  
     as universal acquisition, 70, 273  
 Adsertor libertatis, 48  
 Adstipulatio, 400 n.  
 Adversus infitiantem lis crescit, 389  
 Aediles, 13  
 Aedilician edict, 11, 42, 309, 317, 398  
 Aelius Sextus, 9  
 Aerarium, 125 n.  
 Aes, equestre, hordiarium, militare, 420  
 Aestimatum, 335  
 Affectio maritalis, 63, 66  
     societatis, 321  
 Age of Marriage Act, 1929...62  
 Agency, 329, 351  
 Agents, acquisition through,  
     of ownership, 152, 154  
     of possession, 155  
 Ager limitatus, 128  
     vectigalis, 169  
 Agnates, 1, 252  
 Alaric, 19  
 Alluvio, 128, 137  
 Anastasius,  
     legislation on cession of actions, 408  
     on emancipation, 73  
 Anatocismus, 285  
 Animals, damage by, 398, 399  
     young of, 141  
 Animus domini, 175  
     injuriandi, 383  
     novandi, 407  
 Anniculi causae probatio, 53, 72  
 Annus utilis, 464  
 Antichresis, 289  
 Antinomies, 28  
 Antoninus Pius,  
     adrogation of impuberes, 69  
     pignus ex iudicati causa captum,  
         446  
     treatment of slaves, 46, 76  
 Aquilius Gallus, 281, 295, 409, 438 n.  
 Arbiter, 413, 416, 460  
 Aristotle, 36  
 Arra, 303  
     sponsalicia, 63  
 As, fractions of, 191  
 Assignment of obligations, 402  
 Auctoritas patrum, 4  
 Augustus, 15  
 Aulus Gellius cited, 374, 418  
 Authentica siqua mulier, 26, 363  
 Authenticum, 25  
 Bartolus, 21  
 Basilica, 29  
 Beneficium abstinendi, 217  
     competentiae, 144, 147, 323,  
         441, 442, 444, 454  
     inventarii, 219  
     legis Corneliae, 197  
     separationis, 216  
 Benefit of cession of actions, 361  
     of division, 361, 401  
     of order or excussion, 362  
 Bluhme's theory, 25  
 Bologna, 20  
 Bona adventicia, 59, 70, 164, 197  
     materna, 59  
 Bona fide possessor, 118, 129, 131, 153,  
     371  
     serviens, 48  
 Bonitary ownership, 109  
 Bonorum possessio, 183, 254, 268  
     ab intestato, 254, 268  
     contra tabulas, 204, 205, 208, 269  
     cum re, sine re, 183, 254  
     secundum tabulas, 213, 269  
 Bonorum separatio, 216  
     venditio, 443  
 Breviary of Alaric, 19  
 Brutus, 9  
 Caduca, 202, 203, 218  
 Caelibes, 203, 218  
 Canon, 169  
 Canon Law,  
     acquisitive prescription, 118  
     age of marriage, 62  
     calculation of degrees of kinship,  
         258 n.  
     legitimation by subsequent mar-  
         riage, 67  
     marriage concluded by consent, 102  
     no divorce a vinculo, 103  
 Capacity. *See* Competence.  
 Capitis diminutio, 74, 82, 213  
 Capito, 17  
 Caracalla (Antoninus), 53, 108, 119  
 Carmen famosum, 198  
 Castrense peculium, 59, 197, 199, 200  
 Causa, 342  
 Causa Curiana, 193  
 Causae coniectio—peroratio, 415  
 Cautio, 294  
     de damno infecto, 421, 465  
     de rato, 465, 469  
     iudicatum solvi, 442, 465, 469  
     rem pupilli salvam fore, 465  
 Cavere, 9

- Censors—Census, 13, 48, 75, 201  
 Centumviri, 207, 413, 421  
 Cessicus tutor, 88  
 Cessio bonorum, 442  
 Cessio in jure, 115  
 Cession of actions, 361, 403  
 Children, status of, 45, 67  
 Chirographa, 239  
 Cicero, 6, 74  
 Citations, Law of, 17  
 Claræ personæ, 444  
 Clausula arbitraria, 433  
 Clausula codicillaris, 249  
 Clients, 2  
 Clovis, 20  
 Codex Gregorianus, 23  
     Hermogenianus, 23  
     juris canonici, 62, 258  
     Justinian's, 24, 25  
     Theodosianus, 23  
     vetus, 24  
 Codex accepti et expensi, 218  
 Co-delinquents, 400  
 Codicillary clause, 249  
 Codicils, 247, 249  
 Coemptio, 64, 71, 212 n.  
 Coemptionator, 75  
 Coercitio, 12 n.  
 Cognatio extra ordinem, 315, 328  
 Cognitor, 441  
 Collatio bonorum, 255  
 Collatio legum Mosaricarum et Romanarum, 30  
 Colonatus, 47, 48  
 Colonia partiana, 316  
 Colonial Latins, 52  
 Colony, 51  
 Comitia calata, 3  
     centuriata, 2  
     cunctata, 2  
     tributa, 5  
 Commentaries  
     on the edict, 11, 12  
     on the Twelve Tables, 7  
 commercium, 113  
 Commixtio, 130, 139  
 Commodatum, 246  
 Compensatio, 454  
 Compendinatio, 415  
 Competence  
     to alienate, 150, 171  
     to contract, 343  
 Composition for membrum ruptum, 382  
 Compromissum, 337  
 Concilium plebis, 5, 14  
 Concubinage, 66  
 Condemnatio (in formula), 432  
 Conductio, 369, 417, 425, 426, 449  
     causa data causa non secuta, 368  
     certæ pecuniæ, 284, 295, 367, 434  
     ex injusta causa, 389  
     furtiva, 368, 375, 381, 449  
     incerti, 367, 434 n.  
     indebiti, 133, 278, 367, 369  
     Juventiana, 310 n.  
     ob causam finitam, 368  
     ob turpem vel injustam causam, 367  
     sine causa, 299  
     triticaria, 284, 295, 367, 434  
 Conditiones, various, 368  
 Conductio. See Locatio conductio  
 Contarreatio, 64  
 Confessus, 430  
 Confusio,  
     mode of acquisition, 130, 139  
     of extinction of contracts, 402  
     of extinction of servitudes, 161  
 Consilium, 11, 54  
 Consolidatio, 164  
 Consortium, 320, 324  
 Constitutio Antoniniana, 53, 108  
 Constitutio Principis, 16, 44  
 Constitutum, 386, 360  
     possessorium, 134  
 Constantine, 18  
 Consuetudo, 11 n., 23, 42  
 Consuls, 4, 10, 12  
 Contracts, 279  
     classification of, 279  
     consensual, 301, 302  
     general theory of, 338  
     literal, 298, 301  
     operation of, 345  
     real, 283, 290  
     verbal, 291, 296  
 Contractus, 279  
 Contrarius actus, 404  
 Conubium, 60  
 Conventio in manum, 64, 273  
 Corpus juris civilis, 28  
 Correctly, 401  
 Cornelianus, 9  
 Council of Trent, 102  
 Creditio, 193, 217  
 Cumen suspecti tutoris, 97, 98  
 Cuius, 21  
 Culpa, 281  
     lata, 282  
 Cura, curatio, 89  
 Cursus bonorum, 14  
 Curule aediles, 10, 11, 13, 42, 309  
     magistratus, 41 n.



- Custodia, 282, 283 *n.*, 291 *n.*  
 Damnum emergens, 387  
 Damnum infectum, 421, 464  
 Damnum injuria datum, 386, 390  
 Dasunius, will of, 240  
 Datio in solutum, 404  
 Decemvirs, 7  
 Decreta, 15  
 Decurio, 52 *n.*, 67  
 Dediticii, 53, 55  
 Degrees of relationship, 258, 267  
 Delegation, 402  
 Delict, 370, 377  
 Demonstratio (in formula), 431  
 Deportation, 80  
 Depositum, 287  
     miserabile, 288, 390, 449  
 Detention, 174  
 Diarchy, 18  
 Dicta et promissa, 308  
 Dictators, 12  
 Dies cedit, dies venit, 226  
 Dies utilis, 255 *n.*  
 Diffarreatio, 65  
 Digest, 24  
 Diligentia, 282  
     in custodiendo, 307  
 Diocletian, 18  
 Dissimulatio, 382, 386  
 Distractio bonorum, 444, 446  
 Divorce, 64, 103, 147  
 Dolus, 281, 344  
 Donat, 21  
 Dominium ex jure Quiritium, 108  
 Donatio, 143, 149  
     sub modo, 347  
 Donean (Donellus), 21  
 Dos, 146, 150, 151, 229  
 Dotis dictio, 146, 291  
 Ductio in domum, 63  
 Edict of Milan, 18  
 Edict of Theoderic, 19  
 Edicta, 10, 16  
 Edictum perpetuum, 10, 15  
 Edictum possessorium, 254  
 Emancipation, 73, 81, 103  
 Emblemata Triboniani, 27  
 Emphyteusis, 169, 316, 319  
 Emptio bonorum, 273, 275  
 Emptio venditio, 301, 302, 312  
 Epistola Hadriani, 361, 364  
 Epistolae, 15  
 Epitome of Julian, 25  
 Ercto non cito, 324  
 Ereptoria, 203, 204 *n.*  
 Error, 339, 367, 452  
 Erroris causae probatio, 72  
 Exceptio, 437, 456  
     cognitoria, procuratoria, 441  
     doli, 344, 438  
     jurisjurandi, 457  
     justi domini, 440  
     legis Cinciae, 439  
     legis Plactioiae, 89, 439  
     metus, 344, 438, 456, 457  
     non impleti contractus, 310  
     non numeratae pecuniae, 299, 456  
     pacti, 336, 438, 441, 456  
     rei in iudicium deductae, 430, 441, 457 *n.*  
     rei judicatae, 457  
     restitutae hereditatis, 238  
     S.C. Macedoniani, 286, 439  
     S.C. Trebelliani, 439  
     S.C. Velleiani, 363, 439  
 Exceptions, classification of, 440, 457  
 Exercitor, 353, 396  
 Exheredatio, 204  
 Expenses, necessary and useful, 317  
 Expensilatio, 298 *n.*  
 Expromissor, 133, 142 *n.*  
 Extraneus heres, 217, 220  
 Extraneus manumissor, 84  
 Extraordinaria cognitio, 315, 328  
 Extraordinary procedure, 445  
 Facus, 284  
 Falsa demonstratio, 229 *n.*, 231  
 Familiae emptor, 181, 185, 202  
 Familiae eriscundae iudicium, 432, 450  
     *See also* Adjudicatio.  
 Family settlements, 240  
 Fear. *See* Metus.  
 Festuca, 414  
 Fictio legis Corneliae, 197, 199  
 Fictions in formula, 423  
 Fictions legal, 8  
 Fideicommissa, 222, 236, 243, 246  
     compared with legacies, 241  
 Fideicommissum familiae, 240  
 Fidejussio, 359, 364  
     indemnitas, 360  
 Fidepromissio, 359  
 Fiducia, 332  
 Fiduciary tutor, 84  
 Filius familias, 58  
 Fiscus, 125 *n.*  
 Flavius, 8  
 Force, 345

- Formula, 429, 431  
     arbitraria, 460  
     petitoria, 433  
 Formulary procedure, 421, 428  
     abolition of, 445  
 Foundations, 100  
 Fraud. *See* Dolus.  
 Fraus creditorum, 390  
 Freedmen,  
     status of, 49  
     succession to, 270, 271  
 Freedom, defined, 54  
 Fructuum licitatio, 462  
 Fruits, ownership of, 131, 141, 470  
 Furiosi,  
     cura of, 90, 343  
     incapable of contracting, 343  
     of making wills, 197  
 Furtum, 370, 377  
  
 Gaius, 7, 12, 17, 24, 27, 30  
 Gallus Aquilius. *See* Aquilius Gallus.  
 Gens, 1  
 Gentiles, 253  
 Gift. *See* Donation.  
 Glossators, 20  
 Godefroy, 8  
 Grotius, 36, 303  
 Guardianship. *See* Tutela, Cura.  
     in modern law, 103  
  
 Habitatio, 163, 168  
 Heirs,  
     ab intestato, 251, 270  
     institution of, 187, 190  
     substitution of, 192  
     testamentary, 216, 219  
     who may be instituted, 200  
     who must be instituted or disin-  
         herited, 204  
 Heredes,  
     domestici, 217  
     extranei, 217, 220  
     necessarii, 192, 216, 219  
     sui et necessarii, 216, 219  
 Hereditas, delata, 217  
     jacens, 100, 217  
 Hereditatis petitio, 423  
     possessoria, 254, 423  
 Hermogenianus, 23, 46, 48  
 Hire, 314, 319  
 Hostile capture, 45  
 Humanists, 21  
 Hypnotic suggestion, 345  
 Hypothec, 172  
     tacit, 87, 148, 173, 225  
 Ihering, 21, 175  
 Imperial Constitutions, 16  
 Impetratio domini, 172  
 In jure cessio, 71, 115  
 In jus vocatio, 412, 428, 470  
 Inadificatio, 129, 139  
 Incerta persona, 200, 201, 240, 242  
 Incestus superveniens, 65  
 Indebiti solutio, 366, 369  
 Indefensus, 419  
 Infamia, 171, 208 n., 470  
 Infans, 343  
 Infundum his crescit, 367, 369  
 Ingenuus, 48  
 Injuria, 382, 384  
     atrox, 385  
 Inheritance, acceptance of, 200, 216, 221  
     transmission of, 218  
 Inheritance (Family Provision) Act,  
     1938...211  
 Innocentius, 30 n.  
 Innominate contracts, 333  
 Insinuatio, 135  
 Institor, 353  
 Intentio (in formula), 432  
 Intereessio,  
     of magistrates, 12 n., 14 :  
     of women sureties, 363  
 Interdicts, 459, 465  
 Interdictum  
     de itinere actuque privato, 159  
     de precario, 335  
     de superficie, 170  
     possessorium, 443  
     quorum bonorum, 254, 466  
     Salvianum, 172, 466  
     secundarium, 462  
     unde vi, 467  
     uti possidetis, 461, 466  
     utrobi, 461, 466  
 Interest on money loans, 284, 285  
 Interpolations, 27, 28  
 Interpretatio, 8  
 Intestate succession, 251, 259, 270, 271  
 Invecta et illata, 172  
 Inventory, benefit of, 219  
 Irenius, 20  
 Islands in rivers, 128, 137  
  
 Jaetus lapilli, 465  
 Judex, 413  
 Judicia  
     bonae fidei, 426  
     divisoria, 122, 432, 450  
     legitima, 427  
     imperio continentia, 427

- Judicis postulatio, 416  
 Judicium, 413  
     Cassellianum, 462  
 Julian, 15, 37, 256  
 Junian Latins, 52, 55, 67, 201, 202  
 Jurata promissio operarum, 274 n., 291  
 Juratoria cautio, 469  
 Jurisprudence, 31, 40  
 Juristic Persons, 99  
 Jurists, 9, 16  
 Jus (= Law)  
     Achanum, 9  
     Civile, 32, 41  
         ,, Papinianum, 3  
     Flavianum, 9  
     gentium, 32, 33, 40  
     honorarium, 11, 42  
     naturale, 32, 35, 40, 41  
     non scriptum, 37, 41, 42  
     Quiritium, 41  
     scriptum, 37, 41  
 Jus (= right)  
     abstinenti, 217, 226 n.  
     adherescendi, 150, 188, 218  
     antiquum, 218  
     aureorum anulorum, 50  
     capiendi, 202, 218  
     commercii, 51  
     conubii, 52, 60  
     Jatri, 52 n.  
     liberorum, 88, 89, 198, 256  
     offerendi, 178  
     respondendi, 16, 30, 42  
     retractus, 408  
     tollendi, 129  
     vitae necisque, 58  
 Jusjurandum liberti, 291  
     in litem, 433  
     voluntarium, 336  
 Justa causa, 117  
 Justae nuptiae, 60  
 Justice, 31, 40  
 Justinian, 23  
 Justum matrimonium, 60  
 Justus titulus, 117  
  
 King, 1, 4  
 Kinship. degrees of, 258, 267  
  
 Labeo, 7, 17  
 Laesio enormis, 305, 316  
 Lanfranc, 20  
 Latinitas, Latins, 52, 67  
 Law, different meanings of, 36 n.  
 Law of citations, 17, 24, 42 n.  
 Legacies, 221, 226, 241, 370  
     ademption of, 225, 233  
     compared with fideicommissa, 241  
     vesting of, 225  
 Legal fictions, 8  
 Legatee, partial, 222, 244  
 Leges, 5, 26  
     barbarorum, 19  
     caducariae, 203  
     generales, 16  
     Jusae judicariae, 421, 442  
     regiae, 3  
 Leges mancipii, 308  
 Legis actio  
     per conductionem, 417  
     per judicis postulationem, 292, 416  
     per manus iniectionem, 417  
     per pignoris capionem, 420  
     sacramenti, 413  
 Legis actio procedure, 412, 421  
 Legitim, 69, 208, 210  
 Legitimacy Act, 1926...67  
 Legitimation, 66, 259  
 Leo, legislation of, 294, 296, 350  
 Leonina societas, 321  
 Lex, 4, 23, 37, 41  
     curiata de imperio, 3  
     de censoria potestate, 5  
     regia, 42  
         *Special statutes.*  
 Lex Aebutia, 10, 421  
 Aelia Sentia, 51, 53, 67  
 Apuleia, 362  
 Aquila, 369, 386, 390  
 Atilia, 85, 93  
 Atinia, 117, 124  
 Anastasiana, 403  
 Calpurnia, 417  
 Canuleia, 61  
 Cicereia, 363  
 Cincia, 144, 439  
 Cornelia de edictis perpetuis, 10  
     de falsis, 203, 472  
     de injuriis, 383, 385  
     de sicariis, 46, 472  
     de sponsu, 363  
     testamentaria, 197, 472  
     de imperio Vespasiani, 42 n.  
 Fabia de plagiaris, 473  
 Falcidia, 208, 219, 234, 235, 239  
 Fufia Caninia, 53, 57  
 Furia de sponsu, 362  
 Furia testamentaria, 233, 235, 419  
 Genucia, 285  
 Hortensia, 5, 42

- Lex Hostilia, 468  
 Julia, 62 n., 88, 202  
     ambitus, 473  
     de adulteriis, 65, 472  
     de annona, 473  
     de fundo dotali, 148, 151  
     de maritandis ordinibus, 50, n.  
     de residuis, 473  
     de vi, 467, 472  
     majestatis, 472  
     peculatus, 472  
     repetundarum, 398, 473  
 Julia et Plautia, 117, 124  
 Julia et Titia, 94  
 Junia Norbana, 51, 55, 202  
 Junia Velleia, 206  
 Lucinnia, 416  
 Marcia, 419  
 Minicia, 67  
 Ogulnia, 9  
 Papia Poppaea, 50 n., 88, 122, 202  
 Petronia, 46  
 Pinaria, 415  
 Plaetoria, 89, 439  
 Plautia Papiria, 62 n.  
 Poetelia, 332  
 Pompeia de paricidiis, 58, 472  
 Publilia de sponsu, 362, 419  
 Publilia Philonis, 4  
 Romana Burgundionum, 19  
     Visigothorum, 19  
 Scribonia, 160  
 Silia, 417  
 Valeria de provocatione, 5  
 Vallia, 419  
 Voconia, 201, 225, 234, 235, 253  
 Lex (= term in a contract, etc.)  
     commissoria, 171, 172, 303  
     venditionis, 443  
 Labellus conventionis, 446  
     repudii, 65  
 Liberi naturales, 66  
 Libertinus, 48  
 Libertus orcinus, 49, 246  
 Labripenis, 113, 181  
 Licinian Laws, 10  
 Lis crescens; *See* Infitiando lis crescit.  
 Literal contract, 298, 301  
 Litis aestimatio, 123, 308, 433  
     contestatio, 395, 429  
     denuntiatio, 403  
 Limitation of actions, 121  
 Locatio conductio, 301, 314, 319  
 Longi temporis praescriptio, 120, 123,  
     174  
 Longinus, will of, 288  
 Longissimi temporis praescriptio, 122  
 Lord Hardwicke's Act, 102  
 Lucius Lentulus, 247 n.  
 Lucrum cessans, 387  
 Mancipatio, 113  
     cum fiducia, 171  
 Mancipium, 58, 75, 395  
 Mandata, 16  
 Mandate, 327, 330, 359  
     and Agency, 329  
 Mandatum credendae pecuniae, 360  
     in rem suam, 102  
     post mortem, 329, 360  
     qualificatum, 328  
 Magic, 7  
 Magister navis, 353  
     gistratum edicta, 10  
 Manilius, 9  
 Manumission, 48, 50, 55  
 Manus, 63, 74  
 Manus consortio, 414, 416  
     injectio, 389, 417, 419, 441  
 Marcellus, 55 n.  
 Marcus Antonius, 14, 66  
 Marcus Aurelius, 89  
 Marriage, 60, 77  
     age of, 62,  
     of minors in modern law, 102  
     of peregrines, 66  
     prohibited degrees, 77  
 Married women. status of, 63, 102  
 Merces, 316  
 Merger. *See* Confusio.  
 Merx pecuharis, 353  
 Metus, 344  
 Military tribunes, 14  
 Minors,  
     capacity to contract, 89, 344  
     marriage of, in modern law, 102  
 Missio in possessionem, 464  
 Mixed actions, 428, 449  
 Modes of acquisition, 112  
     *jure civili*, 112  
     *jure naturali*, 125  
 Modestinus, 17  
 Mommsen, 5, 21, 372 n.  
 Mora, 288 n.  
 Mortgage, 178  
 Mucius Scaevola,  
     Publius, 9  
     Quintus, 9, 326  
 Mutuum, 284, 290  
 Natural increment, 128, 137  
     obligation, 278

- Nauticum faenus, 284, 285  
 Negligentia, 282  
 Negotiorum gestio, 365, 368  
 Nexum, 9 n., 276, 292, 332  
 Nomina arcaria, transcripticia, 299  
 Novation, 406, 409  
 Novels, 25  
 Noxa, 395 n.  
 Noxal, 395 n.  
 Noxal actions, 395, 397, 470  
 Noxal surrender, 395, 397  
 Nudum ius Quiritium, 51, 109 n  
 Nuncupation, 113  
 Nuncupative will, 184, 186  
  
 Oblatio curiae, 67  
 Obligatio, 276, 283  
 Obligations  
     assignment of, 402  
     classification of, 277  
     determination of, 404, 408  
     from contract, 279, 283  
         delict, 370, 377  
         quasi-contract, 278, 365, 368,  
             410  
         quasi-delict, 277, 393, 394,  
             411  
     natural, 278  
     the modern law of, 410  
 Occupatio, 125, 136  
 Octavian, 14  
 Odoacer, 19  
 Operae animalium, 164 n.  
     servorum, 163  
 Operis novi nuntiatio, 465  
 Oratio, 15  
 Oratio Severi, 86  
 Orbi, 203, 218  
  
 Pacta nuda, 279  
 Pacts, 335  
     and stipulations, 159, 162, 164, 167  
 Pactum antichreseos, 289  
     arrale, 304  
     de constituenda dote, 337  
     de non petendo, 400, 407, 441,  
         456  
     donationis, 337  
 Papinian, 17  
 Papirius, 3  
 Parapherna, 454 n.  
 Partiarly legatee, 244  
 Partnership, 320, 325  
 Patria potestas, 58, 76  
     how ended, 73, 80  
 Patriarchal family, 1  
  
 Patricians, 2, 41 n.  
 Parricide, 58, 472  
 Paulus, 17  
 Pauperies, 398, 399  
 Payment, 367  
 Peculium of slaves, 47, 153, 197  
     legacy of, 230  
     of sons, 59, 153, 197, 199,  
         200  
     profectium, 60, 154, 274 n  
 Pecunia trajecticia, 284  
 Penal actions, 426  
 Peregrini deditici, 53, 55, 197, 200  
 Periculum rei, 310  
 Permutatio, 334  
 Perpetua tutela mulierum, 88  
 Personal servitudes, 162  
 Persons, Law of, 37, 44  
 Pignus, 171, 289, 291  
     ex iudicati causa captum, 446  
 Plantatio, 130, 140  
 Plebeians, 2  
 Plebiscita, 5, 41  
 Plebiscitum Atinianum, 14 n.  
 Plurality of creditors and debtors, 399,  
     401  
 Plus petitio, 452, 453, 457  
 Pollicitatio, 338  
 Pomponius, 3  
 Pontifex maximus, 14  
 Pontiffs, College of, 3, 8, 9, 68, 69  
 Possessio juris, 176  
 Possession, 118, 174, 178  
     makes title, 178  
     of goods. *See bonorum possessio.*  
 Post-glossators, 21  
 Posthumium, 72, 81, 94  
 Postumi, 91, 200, 259  
 Postumus alienus, 225, 231, 242  
 Pothier, 21  
 Praedes litis et vindiciarum, 415  
 Praedia rustica, suburbana, urbana, 86  
 Praefectus annonae, 357  
 Praejudicia, 363, 423, 432, 449  
 Praescripta verba, 334  
 Praescriptio (in formula), 437  
 Praescriptio longi temporis, 120  
     longissimi temporis, 122  
 Praeteritio, 204, 207, 208  
 Praetor, 4, 10, 12, 13  
     fideicommissarius, 237, 445  
     peregrinus, 10  
         edict of, 12, 34  
     tutelar, 13, 445  
     urbanus, 10

- Praetor's edict, 10, 42  
 Praetorian testament, 183  
 Precarium, 335  
 Price, 305  
 Principal and agent, 351, 356  
     and surety, 358  
 Prisci Latini, 60  
 Private law, 32, 40  
 Pro herede gerere, 217  
 Proculians, 17. *See also* Sabinians.  
 Proculus, 17, 127  
 Procuratio, 327  
 Procurator, 153, 468  
 Prodigals,  
     contracts of, 344  
     cuna of, 90  
     interdiction of, 90, 104  
     wills of, 199  
 Provinces, senatorial, imperial, 142 n.  
 Proximus agnatus, 252  
 Public law, 32, 40  
 Pupillary substitution, 193, 194  
 Pupillus, 85, 343  
  
 Quaestio cum lance et licio, 374  
 Quaestors, 13  
 Quarta Antonina, 69  
     Falcidia, 231, 239  
     Trebelliana, 239  
 Quasi-castrense peculum, 197, 199, 200  
 Quasi-contract, 365, 368, 410  
 Quasi-delict, 393, 394, 411  
 Quasi-tradition, 160, 161  
 Querela inofficiosi testamenti, 207, 211  
     inofficiosae donationis, dotis.  
         210  
     non numeratae pecuniae, 300,  
         301  
 Quinquaginta decisiones, 24  
 Quinary ownership, 108  
  
 Rapina, 377, 381, 427  
 Ratio scripta, 22  
 Raudusculum, 114  
 Real Contracts, 283, 290  
 Real securities, 170  
 "Reception" of the Roman Law, 21  
 Receptum, 337, 396  
 Recuperatores, 413, 429  
 Redhibitory defects, 309  
 Regula Catoniana, 232 n.  
 Reichskammergericht, 22  
 Relegation, 81  
 Replication, 439, 458  
  
 Repudium, 65  
 Res, 105, 110  
     derelicta, 107, 143  
     fungibilibus, 223, 284, 286, 290  
     furtiva, 117  
     litigiosa, 288, 403  
     mancipi, nec mancipi, 107, 114  
     nullus, 107  
     publica, 106, 107 n.  
     religiosa, 106  
     sacra, 106  
     sancta, 106  
 Res perit domino, 310 n.  
 Rescripta, 15, 16  
 Respondere, 9  
 Responsa prudentium, 16, 42, 431  
 Restitutio in integrum, 452, 463  
     natalium, 50  
 Retaliation, 382, 385  
 Rens promittendi—stipulandi, 399  
 Rex sacrorum, 4, 64  
 Risk in contract of sale, 310  
 River-beds, 128, 137  
 Roman Law,  
     in the British Empire, 23  
     influence of, on modern law, 101,  
         177, 250, 258, 410  
     "Reception" of, 21  
 Romulus Augustulus, 19  
 Rutilius, 424, 442  
  
 Sabinians and Proculians, 17, 130, 204,  
     223, 224, 305, 347, 395, 404, 430  
 Sabinus, 16, 17, 30 n.  
 Sachsenspiegel, 258  
 Sacramentum, 413  
 Salarium, 328  
 Sale, 302, 312  
     per aversionem, 311  
     "Sale breaks hire", 315 n.  
 Sale of goods (universal succession), 275  
 Salvius Julianus, 15  
 Satio, 129, 140  
 Satisfactio rem pupilli salvam fore, 87  
 Savigny, 21, 175  
 Schwabenspiegel, 258  
 Sectio bonorum, 442  
 Semel heres semper heres, 188  
 Senate, 1, 4, 6, 15  
 Senatusconsultum, 6, 15, 42  
     Africanum, 262  
     Claudianum, 45, 273, 275  
     Largianum, 272  
     Libonianum, 203  
     Macedonianum, 285, 356  
     Neronianum, 225

- Senatusconsultum—continued.*  
 Orfitianum, 257, 266  
 Pegasianum, 214, 238, 244  
 Tertullianum, 15, 256, 265  
 Trebellianum, 238, 243  
 Velleianum, 363
- Sententia of iudex*, 415, 431
- Sententiae of Paulus*, 18, 19, 30
- Sequester*, 288
- Servi poenae*, 44
- Servitudes*, 156, 161  
 abnormal, 164  
 general rules, 165  
 personal, 162  
 real or praedial, 156, 159
- Servius Sulpicius*, 11, 83, 326, 372
- Servius Tullius*, 2
- Servus fugitivus*, 124
- Sextus Aelius*, 9
- Slavery*, 44, 76  
 definition of, 54  
 repugnant to natural reason, 36
- Slaves*,  
 stipulations of, 357  
 wills of, 197  
 usufructuary, 153
- Social contract*, 36
- Social war*, 52, 62
- Societas*, 320, 325
- Solarium*, 170
- Soldiers*, testamentary privileges of, 184,  
 186, 188, 191, 207, 217, 233, 234
- Solidarity*, 400, 401
- Solon*, 6, 7
- Solutio*, 367, 400, 401, 408  
 per aes et libram, 405
- Solutionis gratia adjectus*, 347
- Spacium deliberandi*, 193, 217, 219
- Specific performance*, 431, 433, 446
- Specificatio*, 130, 138
- Spoliatus ante omnia restituendus est*,  
 467 n.
- Sponsalia*, 62
- Sponsio*, 292, 350  
 per sponsonem agere, 433
- Sponsio et restipulatio tertiae partis*,  
 284
- Statute of Merton*, 67
- Statutes of Distribution*, 258
- Statuliber*, 48
- Stipendiary lands*, 142
- Stipulatio*, 291, 296  
 Aquiliana, 235, 409  
 duplae, 307  
 emptae et venditae hereditatis, 238  
 fructuaria, 462
- Stipulatio—continued.*  
 habere licere, 307  
 partis et pro parte, 238  
 rem pupilli salvam fore, 297, 346  
 usurarum, 284
- Stipulations*,  
 invalid, 348  
 kinds of, 295, 297  
 procedural, 295, 297
- Subscriptiones*, 15
- Substitution of heirs*, 192, 194
- Successio in possessionem*, 119
- Succession*, 179  
 intestate, 251  
 testamentary, 180
- Sui heredes*, 251
- Sulpicius*. *See* *Servius Sulpicius*.
- Superficies*, 169  
 solo cedit, 129
- Suretyship*. *See* *Principal and Surety*.
- Syngraphae*, 299
- Tacita relocatio*, 318
- Taho*, 382, 385
- Tarquinius Superbus*, 4
- Terentilius Arsa*, 6
- Testamentary succession*, 180  
 the modern law of, 250
- Testamenti factio*, 196  
 of heirs, 200, 220  
 of legatees, 225, 230  
 of testator, 196, 198  
 of witnesses, 201
- Testamentum*  
 comitiis calatis, 180, 185  
 in procinctu, 180, 185  
 militare, 184, 186  
 per aes et libram, 181, 185  
 tripartitum, 183, 185
- Testamentum destitutum*, 214, 216  
 inofficiosum, 207, 211  
 irritum, 213  
 rescissum, 214  
 ruptum, 213
- Theoderic*, Edict of, 19
- Theodosius I*, 18
- Theodosius II*. *See* *Chronology*.
- Theophilus*, 24, 39, 298 n.
- Thesaurus*, 135, 141
- Things*,  
 classification of, 105  
 corporeal, incorporeal, 107, 109, 111
- Titulus justus*, 117  
 putativus, 117, 118 n.
- Traditio*, 132, 142  
 per cartam, 135

- Transactio, 335  
 Transmissio Justinianeae, 219  
     Theodosiana, 218  
 Trebatius, 247, 249  
 Tribonian, 24, 25, 27  
 Tribunes, 14  
     military, 14  
 Tribunician veto, 12 n.  
 Tributary lands, 142  
 Trinoctio abesse, 64  
 Tripertita, 9  
 Turpes personae, 208  
 Tutela, 83, 91, 103  
 Tutor cessicius, 88  
     dativus, 85  
     fiduciarius, 75, 84, 198  
     nominated, 85  
     praetorius, 95  
 Tutors, duties and functions of, 85  
 Twelve Tables,  
     origin and character, 6; *particular provisions*—patron and client, 2;  
     sale of insolvent debtors, 45, 418;  
     manus broken by trinoctii absentia, 64; divorce, 65; son sold  
     three times free from potestas, 71;  
     statutory tutela of agnates, 83,  
     92, of patrons, 84, 93; crimen  
     suspecti tutoris, 87, 98; actio  
     rationibus distrahendis, 87; agnatic  
     cura of madmen and prodigals, 90;  
     usucapio, 117, 119, 120, 124; when  
     property passes on sale, 133, 142;  
     actio de tigno injuncto, 129; ser-  
     vitude of via, 157; uti legassit  
     suae rei, ita jus esto, 182,  
     233, 235; carmen famosum, 198;  
     intestate succession, 251, 259, 263,  
     271; rate of interest, 285; iusjuran-  
     dum, 292; penalties for theft, 373,  
     374, 375; for injuria, 382, 385;  
     death penalty for iudex or arbiter  
     who takes a bribe, 393; noxal sur-  
     render, 395, 397; actio de pastu  
     pecoris, 398; composition for mem-  
     brum ruptum, 406; in jus vocatio,  
     412; iudicis postulatio, 416;  
     manus injectio, 418; pignoris  
     cappio, 420; actio de arboribus suc-  
     cisis, 390, 421; de aedibus incen-  
     sis, 390; aeris confessi, 430.  
     Ulpian, 17, 27, 30  
     Universal Law. *See* Jus gentium.  
     Universal succession, 273  
     Universitas, 100  
     Usucapio, 116, 123  
         libertatis, 158  
         lucrative, 120, 173, 333  
         pro herede, 119  
     Usurae, 284, 285  
     Usureceptio, 120, 173, 333  
     Usurpatio, 119  
     Usus, in marriage, 64  
         personal servitude, 163, 167  
     Ususfructus, 162, 166  
     Utilis actio. *See* Actions.  
     Vadimonium, 413, 429  
     Vatican fragments, 29  
     Vectigal, 169  
     Venditio bonorum, 443  
         rei speratae—*spei*, 301  
     Venia aetatis, 90  
     Verbal contracts, 291, 296, 298  
     Veteres, 9  
     Vetustas, 160  
     Vindicatio, 375, 433, 449  
         in libertatem, 73, 449  
     Vindicta, 48  
     Vis, 345, 467 n.  
         ex conventu, 461  
         major, 283, 318, 337  
     Voet, 21  
     Votum, 338  
     Wills,  
         abnormal or irregular, 184  
         failure of, 212, 214  
         holograph, 185 n., 251  
         military, 184, 251  
         notarial, 251  
         nuncupative, 184  
         who may witness, 201  
     Women,  
         contracts of, 344  
         testamentary capacity of, 198  
     Zeno, 19, 20  
         legislation on emphyteusis, 169,  
             316, 319  
         on injuria, 385  
         on plus petitio, 453, 457





